

TOTAL AMIGA

Issue 22, Winter 2005

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**Winter
Wonderland?**



Amiga Forever 2005 Premium



DVPlayer: OS 4 movie player



AmiDisk: OS 4 native file manager



World of Wi-Fi

Plus:

- OS 4 and MorphOS updates.
- Big Bash 3 and Amigathering 6 reports.
- Interviews.
- Rexx Programmer's Reference review.
- Battle for Wesnoth review.
- Optimising graphics memory tutorial.



Broken Sword

For Amigans, By Amigans, On Amigas!

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Editorial

Welcome to Total Amiga issue 22 and what a jam-packed issue we have for you this time (so much so that I'm squeezed into this tiny column)! Much of the buzz on the Amiga forums recently and at the Big Bash 3 show in Peterborough (see our report in this issue) has been about the Amy'05 PPC motherboard from a new company, Troika. We have been lucky enough to get an exclusive mini-interview with the people behind Amy'05 and some pictures as they gear up for production. So, if you haven't already done so take a look now! Once you've taken that in, don't forget that there's much more in this issue! In particular there's two more great interviews, the latest Amiga Forever release for retro fans and more on Wi-Fi. If you're a US or Canadian reader, then you may notice that this issue has been posted from Canada. Greg Condon of the PANORAMA Amiga users group in Vancouver is now printing a second run of Total Amiga in Canada. This has enabled us to cut our subscription rates to North America by 25%! Thanks to Greg for his on-going effort to help readers in this region. We need your help to keep each issue as packed with varied and interesting content as this one... if you would like to contribute please contact me for details. Enjoy the mag!

Robert Williams
editor@totalamiga.org

AmigaOS 4.0
Prepares for Launch

In the lead up to the release of Amiga OS 4.0, Hyperion are launching an official website for the operating system. We understand that the web site will probably be on-line by the time you read this and that an announcement will be made to the Amiga press when the site is launched. The new site also showcases the new-look OS 4 logo which we reproduce above. According to Hyperion, the website will grow over time to act as a central resource for both current and future users and licensees of Amiga OS 4. At the time of launch the website will contain three separate introductions to the OS, each targeted at different groups of users, and a number of interesting articles intended to remind people of the great legacy of the operating system and the features that make it such a great user experience. Over time, further articles will be added to give more insight into the new version of the OS, and Hyperion will be offering downloads and a developer's section from the web site closer to the Amiga OS 4.0 launch. The new site will be available from the following URL:
os4.hyperion-entertainment.biz



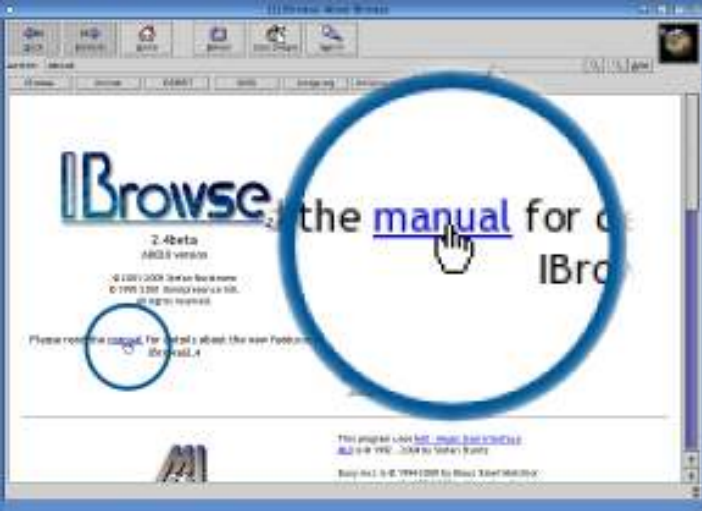
A preview of the new Amiga OS 4 web site showing how it introduces the OS and reminds visitors of key features.

IBrowse Draws Closer

Details of the long-awaited upgrade to IBrowse, one of the Amiga's premier web browsers, have now been released and beta versions of the new release have been demonstrated at shows around the world. Version 2.4 is mainly a bug-fix release while the team concentrates on version 3.0 which will support newer web standards like CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) and the DOM (Document Object Model). Despite its minor upgrade status, the new version still promises many useful enhancements, an extensive list of which are available on the IBrowse web site. Probably the biggest item in the list is the new plug-in API which will enable developers to make software that integrates into web pages. The first example of this will be the Flash animation plug-in which will be supplied with IBrowse 2.4. This plug-in will enable IBrowse users to view many sites that use Flash animated content. The IBrowse team point out that their plug-in is based on an open source Flash player that does not support features of the more recent versions of Flash, however it should be a big improvement over no Flash support at all! A small improvement that is bound to win IBrowse 2.4 a lot of fans is the ability to open web pages in a background tab. This feature enables you to open a link in a new tab but have the tab you are currently viewing remain active, the new page then loads

in the background so it is ready when you have completed reading the first page. Trust me, it's really handy! Another minor enhancement is the addition of context-sensitive pointers, at last the IBrowse pointer will give you a clue if you are hovering over a text or image link. Under OS 4, IBrowse gains preliminary character set support, this means that pages which use other character sets such as those in Greek and Russian will now display correctly. The support is called preliminary because it only covers the web page itself and not aspects of the user interface such as form elements (buttons, text fields etc.) or page titles. The spoofing engine, which allows IBrowse to pretend to be another browser to fool brain dead web sites has been

rewritten to be much more flexible which should improve compatibility. Javascript handling has been improved and for OS 4 users there is a PPC native version of the javascript.library which should substantially improve performance on Javascript heavy sites. Many other aspects of the browser have seen smaller enhancements and bug fixes. These include the HTML engine and table parser, cookie support, the internal GIF decoder and memory management. IBrowse 2.4 will be a free upgrade for version 2.x users, a paid upgrade for owners of older versions is expected. For further details, including a very extensive list of the hundreds of changes since 2.3, visit the IBrowse web site:
<http://www.ibrowse-dev.net>



A screenshot of IBrowse 2.4 beta running on OS 4 with the new context-sensitive pointer image highlighted.

About Total Amiga

Total Amiga is published quarterly by South Essex Amiga Link.
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Only Amiga Software Made it Possible
Total Amiga is designed and laid out using:
Hardware: Home built x86 PC: Athlon XP 2500+, 512MB RAM, nVidia GeForce 2 MX400
AmigaOne-XE: 800MHz G4, 512MB RAM, 3DFX Voodoo 3 3000
Software: Amithlon by Bernie Meyer et. al. Amiga OS 3.9 by Amiga Amiga OS 4 by Hyperion PageStream 4.1 by Softlogik ImageFX 4.5 by Nova Design

Perfect Paint 2.93 by Georges Halvadjan Photogenics 5 by Paul Nolan Final Writer 5 by Softwood Ghostscript from artofcode LLC, Amiga OS port by Whoosh777. There are also some essential utilities we couldn't live without: Directory Opus 5, SGrab, MCP, Turbo Print 7, MakeCD. Our thanks to the creators of this and all the other great Amiga software out there. Total Amiga is entirely created using Amiga software, no other platforms are used at any stage of the design or layout process.

Fonts
The body text of Total Amiga is set in Triumvirate Normal as supplied with PageStream, the heading typeface is Forgotten Futurist by Ray Larabee. Take a look at Ray's huge range of freeware fonts at <http://www.larabiefonts.com> and his commercial foundry at <http://www.typodermic.com>.

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News Bites...
Adios Garry

DaveyD, the web master of AmigaWorld.net, recently posted to the site that Garry Hare has contacted him and stated "Several months ago I terminated my association with Amiga, Inc. I am no longer affiliated with Amiga in any capacity." You may remember that Garry's company KMOS purchased the rights to Amiga OS and then purchased Amiga Inc. itself, and then dropped the KMOS name in favour of Amiga Inc.! Amiga themselves have not made a statement regarding this move and we have no information on what it might mean for the company's fortunes. We do know that this change has had no noticeable effect on the development of Amiga OS 4 which continues apace (see our OS 4 Update feature for further details). You can read the e-mail from Garry and some reactions at the following AmigaWorld.net thread:
http://amigaworld.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id=15634&forum=16

Boxes in Synergy

Many people now have more than one computer and having more than one keyboard and mouse around soon becomes a frustrating experience. If you have networked computers which each have their own monitor then Synergy is a handy open source program that enables you to share a keyboard and mouse across the network so there's no need to buy a switch. To use Synergy, the computer with the keyboard and mouse connected runs the server program and a client program, synergyc, runs on all the other computers that share the input devices. You configure the server so it knows how your monitors are physically arranged and then when the pointer reaches the edge of the screen control "jumps" to the computer controlling the monitor on that side.

Synergy is available for Windows, Mac OS X and Linux, and now Douglas McLaughlin has ported the client program to OS 4. The Amiga port implements the basic Synergy features (keyboard and mouse sharing) and also supports clipboard sharing so you can copy information to the clipboard on one computer and paste it on another! A couple of features are currently not implemented: screen blanker synchronisation and support for Mac OS X as a server (the keyboard mapping is incorrect) but for most users these will be unimportant.

Synergy is a free download from OS4Depot.net, Douglas asks that you send him an e-mail if you use the program. <http://www.os4depot.net/amisynnergyc.lha> in network/misc

Synergy

Open Your MindSpace...

MindSpace is a work in progress OS 4 native drawing package designed with creating diagrams in mind. The author lists potential uses as flow charts, UML diagrams, mind maps and brain storms. Unified Modelling Language (UML) is a standard used by software developers to model their software, the models created can be expressed as a

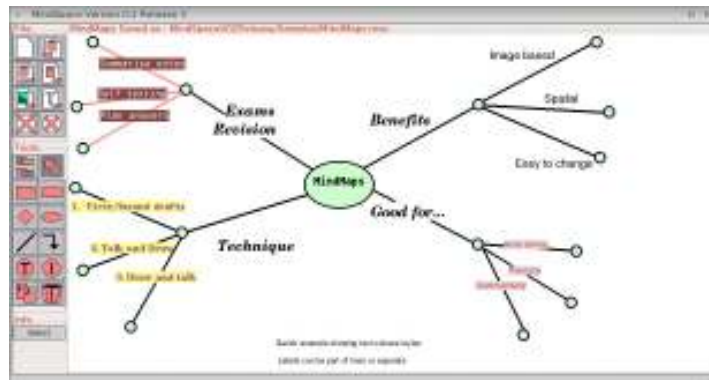


diagram. Future versions of MindSpace will be able to produce code templates for C++ classes and C structures from a UML diagram.

The current release is 0.2 and can already be used to create simple diagrams. Tools are available to draw basic shapes, lines and text. Objects can have fill and border colours, and the

line weight of the borders can be defined. Some of the shapes available are clearly designed with specific types of diagram in mind and the author plans to add "primitives" (templates) for many types of diagram. Unlike a classic drawing program (like DrawStudio) in later releases you will be able to use connecting lines to structure your diagram, and these connections will remain intact as objects are moved in the diagram.

MindSpace 0.2 is freely distributable and can be downloaded from the developer's web site below. His long term plan is to produce a usable free demo version with limited export facilities and a full release at a low price (around 10Euro is currently envisaged). <http://www.ast-workshops.co.uk/mindspace>

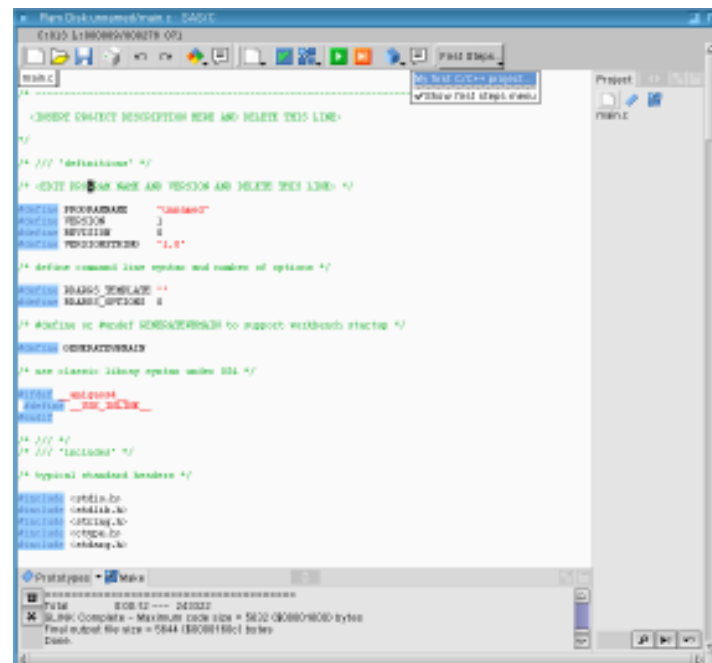
Turning Gold into... CubiC?

Dietmar Eilert has released a new version of his popular GoldEd Studio product and in the process has given it a new name, CubiC IDE (Integrated Developer Environment), to better describe its capabilities. The key part of the environment is still GoldEd, a powerful text editor that is now at version 8. GoldEd is very flexible in its configuration and is supplied with specialised editing modes for C/C++, HTML, ARexx, Installer and other languages. To create a full development environment CubiC integrates with SAS/C, vbcc, gcc and Storm C with the following features:

- Source level debugger support for StormC users: breakpoints are displayed next to the code.
- Configurable references system for includes, source codes and other material to help find information quickly.
- QuickInfo function to display information related to the word under the cursor (e.g. prototypes of OS functions).
- Highlight of matching brackets.
- QuickFunc navigation lists all functions, labels etc. defined in your source codes.
- Grep support for searches using regular expressions.
- Free compilers included with easy installers.
- SDKs included for OS 3.x,

MorphOS, PowerUP and WarpOS.

CubiC IDE is a 68K Amiga program and is supported by the author under AmigaOS 3.x and MorphOS. Dietmar has stated that he does his best to support Amiga OS 4 although he does not have a system to test on. The full CubiC IDE package costs 69.90 Euro and upgrades are available for GoldEd Studio AIX owners at 19.90 Euro. The package is supplied on CD which



includes the free compilers that would otherwise require a very large download. You can pay either by bank transfer (if you are located within the Eurozone this should be very cheap or free) or by PayPal. Find out more and download a demo version at Dietmar's website: <http://www.dietmar-eilert.net/>

When available, you can buy the package on-line at his web shop: <http://www.dietmar-eilert.net/shop/webshop.htm>

AmiNetRadio Turns 4

AmiZeux have made a new release of AmiNetRadio, their music player which in previous versions has emphasised Shoutcast MP3 streaming support. While the excellent Shoutcast support with its powerful search facility is still there, the team have worked hard to enhance other aspects of the program. The play-list editor in particular has been improved with the ability to resynchronise play-lists with the files available on your hard disk. Play-lists are now automatically created containing the hundred most recently played songs and all the songs played in the last 7 days.

ANR has an extensive plug-in system which allows for many

areas of the program to be extended. For example, audio format plug-ins are now included for a really wide range of sound files including AHX, CDDA, Soundmon, FutureComposer, WAV and AIFF.

A new user interface plug-in is included which places all ANR's functions in one tabbed window for those that prefer this approach over the multi-windowed standard GUI.

Other improvements include two new scopes, more ARexx commands, and many bug fixes.

AmiNetRadio is primarily developed and tested under MorphOS, but it is a 68K program so it should work under



Rockin' to the Beat!

The collection of OS 4 native audio software is growing with the latest addition being RockBEAT, a software drum machine with a ReAction user interface from James Carroll who you might recognise as the author of the WookieeChat IRC client. RockBEAT is a software drum machine which enables you to create your own drumming tracks and save them out as WAV format audio files. The program can create multiple tracks each one being 4 x 4/4 measures with 16th notes. You

can save either individual tracks or all the tracks as a complete song. The program uses 16bit 44100Hz PCM WAV samples for the drum sounds. A selection are supplied and you can add more simply by copying them into the correct directory.

RockBEAT is shareware and costs \$15 to register. A demo version with a 10 minute time limit is available for download from:

<http://wookiechat.amigarevolution.com/rockbeat>



MOS TCP/IP Develops

MorphOS has long lacked a native TCP/IP stack with users having to use Miami or Genesis under emulation to get their computers on the 'net. This situation at last seems to be changing with "Sonic" working hard to create a new native stack called ezTCP based on existing open source software. A MorphZone.org bounty has been setup to reward this effort and the features required to complete it include DHCP support and a MUI user interface. Beta versions are currently being regularly released on MorphZone and each one seems to make considerable progress and work with more network applications.

For further details and to download the latest beta visit: http://www.morphzone.org/modules/bounty/bounty_view.php?mychoice=ezTCP

View at Factor 5

WarpView is a new picture viewer for Amiga OS 4, while fairly simple in functionality its unique "selling" point is that it uses Warp3D for its image display. The advantage of this method of display is that the graphics card's processor is used to scale the image which is both very fast and looks smooth. Once loaded, the image can be zoomed, rotated and panned. If you select an image within a directory the cursor keys can be used to display the other images.

WarpView requires an AmigaOne with a Radeon graphics card (the author is working on Voodoo support) and is reported to work on OS 4 pre-release update 3.

<http://os4depot.net/warpview.lha> in graphics/viewer

all versions of Amiga OS. The initial 4.0 release caused some crashes on 3.x and didn't work on OS 4 but this was quickly corrected with 4.1. Most functions now work on non-MorphOS systems except for the ANRNG skin, and some of the player and scope plug-ins; there is a compatibility guide on the program's website. ANR is a free download from: <http://amigazeux.net/anr/>

Aminet News

Since the release of the new interface at Aminet.net, the maintainers of the Amiga's long-standing premier software archive have continued to add new features to the site and to resurrect old functionality that was lost during the upgrade. Since we last mentioned Aminet in issue 20, notable additions to the web interface have included:

- A variety of upload statistics so you can track site and category upload activity.
- Customisable RSS feeds so you view uploads that interest you in an RSS news reader.
- Site-wide architecture filtering so you can exclude software incompatible with your hardware or OS.
- Sort order of file listings can be changed by clicking the column headers.

An example of old functionality that has returned is ADT support on the Aminet.net FTP server. ADT stands for Aminet Download Tool and is an extension to the FTP protocol that enables an application on a remote machine to perform Aminet searches and display lists of recently uploaded files. This feature will be welcomed by users of FTP clients like AmiTradeCenter and AmFTP which support ADT.

The new Aminet user interface can be found at the URL below, if you want to support the development of Aminet, a PayPal donation button is available. <http://www.aminet.net/>

Scalos Update

The Scalos team have released the latest version of their Workbench replacement system which now includes a native PPC MorphOS version (where it replaces the default Ambient desktop). Scalos has many advantages over Workbench including full internal multi-tasking, more powerful name view, support for PNG icons (with full alpha-channels), configurable menus and context sensitive pop-up menus.

In addition to MorphOS support, recent releases have added (amongst many other changes):

- Thumbnail views of items within a drawer.
- The icon under the pointer can be highlighted (optional).
- Default icons for file types have adjustable transparency.
- Tool tips provide information about files and drawers, plug-ins support for information about specific file types (for example image dimensions).

Scalos is freeware and can be downloaded from the link below, note that the latest releases are currently in Beta. <http://scalos.noname.fr>



Candy Factory 2 showing multiple project windows, the layer manager and combined toolboxes.

Let the Development Begin!

Hyperion have released version 51.15 of the Amiga OS 4 Software Development Kit (SDK) to OS 4 developer pre-release users. The kit includes the tools and documentation developers need to create native programs for OS 4. Key features include:

- GNU C/C++ compiler, incl. the GDB source-level debugger.
- Includes and Autodocs for Pre-Release Update 3.

- VBCC ANSI-C compiler.
- Developer documentation and example source code.
- Many pre-configured third-party libraries as contributions.
- Code profiling support for both clib2 and newlib.
- Based on GCC 3.4.4 tool set.

The SDK is available as a free download from the Hyperion web site for pre-release users. The

complete package weighs in at about 100MB, this is also available in several "chunks" for users on slower Internet connections and there is also a slimmed down version for those who don't require the contributions.

To download, login with your OS 4 pre-release details at: www.hyperion-entertainment.biz

Candy Factory 2: News at Last

The original release of Candy Factory Pro, a graphics package ideal for quick buttons, titles and logos, was always a firm favourite here at Total Amiga. So we were pleased to hear that development had resumed back in 2003. For a long time nothing more was heard, but in July ZeoNeo revealed that work had continued since the original announcement and they demonstrated it at Amiga shows at the end of that month.

The premise of Candy Factory remains the same in the new version, you take a mask (that is a greyscale image) and then apply effects such as textures, bevels, glows, drop-shadows, bump-mapping and lighting to it

to produce an attractive effect. The mask can either be produced in the program (for example you could create text for a logo) or created externally and imported. The combination of Candy Factory's effects makes it easy to achieve all kinds of results, it is particularly effective at mimicking natural surfaces like metal or plastic but the choice is really up to you. All Candy Factory's controls update in real-time so you can tweak your settings until you're happy with the result, there's no waiting for effects to "render".

Version 2 is a substantial upgrade and many parts of the program have been rewritten to take full advantage of Amiga OS

4. This means the program is PPC native and has a ReAction GUI using new features introduced in OS 4. All over the program, improvements have been made that address some of the shortcomings of the earlier release. Multiple project windows can now be opened at the same time and the working canvas can have an unlimited size viewed using scroll bars. This is a big improvement over the last release where the canvas was limited to the size of the screen; which was a major limitation for print projects where higher than screen resolution is required.

Multiple layers will allow several effects to be included in one image without having to first "fix" the initial effect to the background. You can go back and edit any layer at any time and also change the layer order (via drag 'n' drop) greatly adding to the program's flexibility.

Candy Factory 2 makes use of the new ReAction "toolbox" class windows for its editing palettes, these are special windows for this task that do not become selected when you click them – meaning when you choose a tool the window stays selected. The tool windows in Candy Factory 2 are even more powerful, settings for things like "bump-map", "bevel" and "material" can be kept in individual windows or combined in a single tabbed window to reduce screen clutter!

No further details of Candy Factory 2 have been announced so far, and the program isn't yet mentioned on the ZeoNeo web site. You can read the official press release and see some more screenshots in this thread on AmigaWorld.net: <http://amigaworld.net/modules/news/article.php?storyid=2449>

Trawl for Music with TuneNet

Playing back media tends to be processor intensive, so having native players for your processor is a real advantage. This is doubly true for audio players because they are often left to run in the background while you do other things with your computer. OS 4 users will be pleased to find TuneNet, a native MP3 player with Shoutcast streaming support by Paul Heams which is in constant development.

TuneNet integrates with IBrowse and AWeb so you can easily listen to Shoutcast streaming audio. You can also listen to MP3 files from your hard drive which can be organised via play

lists. Some of the program's other features include an Internet stream search facility, sound level meters, and a station and current tune display.

Recent alpha releases have added new features. A plug-in system enables the program to support more sound formats; basic Protracker and AIFF plug-ins are already available. Another addition that we're sure many users will like is the ability to save a stream to your hard disk for later listening. Even more exciting enhancements are planned for the future including Shoutcast broadcasting (which we don't believe is currently

possible on the Amiga) and improvements to the interface.

TuneNet is freeware and can be downloaded from: <http://www.tunenet.co.uk>



TuneNet showing Internet radio stations.

KHTML Koming Soon?

As great as Amiga web browsers are, especially in the user interface department, their development teams have a hard job keeping up with the standards used on the web and also with the many ways web developers use and misuse them. One common plea heard from Amiga users is "why doesn't someone just port an open source browser?". While projects like AmiZilla show that this is no mean feat, a lone coder going by the nick' of Marcik has started work on a web rendering library for MorphOS based on the KHTML engine. In the short time he has been working on the project, Marcik has already reported some impressive progress.

KHTML is the rendering engine developed for the KDE project's Konqueror browser which is also used by Apple as the basis for Webcore which is behind its Safari browser. Marcik has based his port on GTK+Webcore a version of Webcore further modified by Nokia (phew!).

Screenshots on the developer's site (two of which are shown below) show development versions of the library running in a very simple browser and successfully displaying pages with good layout and images. There is even a screen-movie available where you can see it in action. All in all it shows more progress than any of the other porting projects that we have

seen. In his FAQ section, Marcik says he aims to have a beta version out by the end of the year and an initial release in February 2006.

While Marcik is aiming his development at MorphOS, the end result will be open source (under the LGPL and BSD licences) and he says it should not be a hard task for someone to port it to Amiga OS 3.x or OS 4. If you would like to support this development, there is a bounty open on MorphZone.org (standing just shy of \$700 or about £400 as I write) which will go to the developer once the port is complete and meets a set of documented objectives.

For more details, screenshots and a link to the bounty visit: http://KHTML.ppa.pl/index_en.php



Marcik's KHTML-based test browser showing ask.com and MorphZone.org. The layout looks pretty good!



New Wookie

In addition to his work on RockBEAT, James Carroll has been continuing to develop his IRC client, WookieChat. Since our review of version 1.52 in issue 20, lots of new features have been added bringing the program up to version 1.9. Notable improvements include: A URL grabber window which records all URLs displayed and allows them to be visited in a browser. Sounds can be played to alert you to a new tab opening or a particular word being mentioned, you can choose to only play these sounds when the WookieChat window is inactive. Chat history allows you to recall, edit and re-send previous messages. Probably the most useful new feature is that DCC-send support is now implemented so you can send files directly to other users.

Download the latest version of WookieChat from: <http://wookiechat.amigarevolution.com/wookiechat>

3CAG

If you live within a reasonable distance of Peterborough in the UK, then you'll be pleased to hear that a new Amiga user group is being started by Paul Hovell (known as The_Editor on AmigaWorld.net and the brains behind the Big Bash series of Amiga shows). The 3 Counties Amiga Group (3CAG) are aiming to hold their first meeting in mid-November and plan to charge members only for the meetings they attend. The group are keen to recruit members so if you are in the area why not get in touch with them, further details should be available on their web site by the time you read this:

<http://www.3cag.net>



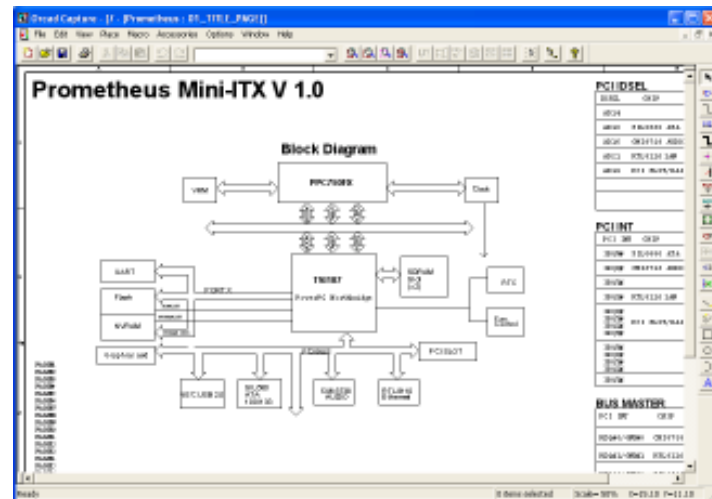
Features Troika Amy'05

Recently a company new to the Amiga scene, Troika NG announced that they are working on a new PowerPC-based motherboard to run Amiga OS 4. Troika planned to show a prototype of the board at Big Bash 3 in September but unfortunately due to component supply problems did not have it ready in time. However during the show specifications were released along with the board's official name, Amy'05.

The Amy'05 is a flex ATX sized motherboard measuring 170 by 191mm, making it slightly larger than the mini ITX µA1-C but only by 20mm on one side. A PPC 750Fx (G3) processor is soldered directly to the board and is cooled by a heat-sink and fan. Amy'05 uses a Tundra Semiconductor Tsi107 northbridge, this is the component that interfaces the PCI bus, RAM and other systems to the processor. System memory is provided through 2 DIMM slots for PC100/133 SDRAM up to 1GB in total, inexpensive unbuffered modules can be used. The following functions are built into the Amy'05:

- Gb/100Mb/10Mb Ethernet port using RTL8110 controller.
- 5 High Speed USB 2.0 ports: 3 rear and 2 front connectors.
- Two ATA 133 (IDE) channels (4 devices) using SiI0680 controller.
- 6-channel 5.1 surround sound with audio headers. Support for Line In, microphone (Analogue) and SPDIF (digital).
- Two 33 Mhz, 32bit PCI slots

You will notice that no "legacy" ports such as PS/2 mouse, PS/2 keyboard, parallel or serial are included. This reduces the complexity of the board and shouldn't cause many problems as USB devices are so widely available. Users with USB storage devices will be pleased to see the inclusion of USB 2.0 high speed which offers massively enhanced transfer rates.



The Amy'05 (part of a family of products called Prometheus) block diagram showing the logical layout of its components.

Troika seem to have been listening to calls for an affordable way to become an OS 4 user, and are aiming to price the Amy'05 at less than £400. To minimise production costs the CPU is not upgradable and no on-board graphics chip is

included. Users will need to purchase an inexpensive PCI graphics card to use with the board. No doubt most Amiga dealers will stock suitable cards that are supported by OS 4.



Photos showing Amy'05 components ready for production, from left to right: A Tsi107 north bridge and design manual, Tsi107s ready for use, various ancillary components including DIMM sockets.

Q&A

We asked Troika some questions that didn't seem to be answered in their press release or in the FAQ section on their site (<http://www.troikang.com>).

We were sorry not to meet you and see the Amy'05 at Big Bash 3, what went wrong?

All our plans were to introduce Amy'05 at the BB3 show. We all worked very hard to be there, but in the end it didn't work out. We had more posters, fliers and the Amy'05 Rev.B would have been shown in a beautiful case that Simion Archer made for the show.

We ran into a major problem at the last minute. We used some of the same sound components in the Rev.B design as the µA1. The parts were on order and listed as available for some 6 weeks, we then received an email telling us those parts were no longer available. This trashed all our plans for BB3 and the sound system!

Given those problems, what are your plans?

Our next step has been to take out the sound system and get the Rev.B board out, so that the testing and porting can be finished. We had other improvements that would be brought into the Rev.B1, some of those have now made it into the Rev. B board that should be out by the time you read this.

Next steps follow as the Rev.B board is tested and used, any changes are made into the Rev.B1 board. This board is then tested and we might have a Rev B2 board to test or Amy'05 will become the Rev.C (commercial) board for series production and resale.

What inspired you to design the Amy'05?

Many of the early ideas for Amy'05 took shape at the time the Mac Mini first came out. We researched most of the talk from AmigaWorld.net, along with ideas and problems AmigaOne users were having.

We wanted to make a complete break from many of the legacy

parts used and wanted to move OS 4 to some new levels starting with USB 2.0. Amy'05 moves on to USB ports for the mouse and keyboard.

What is the estimated release date of the Amy'05?

Our goal is still for Amy'05 to enter production this year. You have to plan parts orders some 6-8 weeks in advance for production runs, most of that work is done for the first run.

Do you have plans to be able to meet both the initial "pent-up" demand for an OS 4 compatible board and ongoing demand, avoiding long waits between production runs?

In our business plan, we have two production runs scheduled for 2005.

Do you plan to sell Amy'05 boards directly or will they be sold via dealers?

We will use both sales methods, different for each country. We have a long list of Amiga dealers

that would love to have Amy'05 in their hands right now!

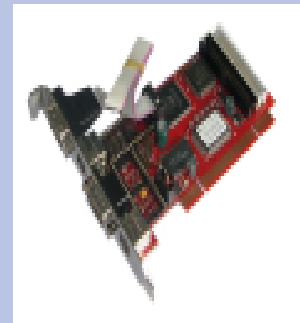
Will Amy'05 be licenced to run OS 4?

We designed Amy'05 from the start to run OS 4. Just less than a year ago we contacted all the parties involved in the OS 4 process and went to work on our project. We operate very differently than many companies, and feel that fluffed up news releases that end up empty, are not worth our time or your readers. Therefore don't expect us to have a major news release on OS 4. It would be unprofessional to comment on our business dealings and we would rather demo a working product.

What other operating systems will Amy'05 be able to run?

Various versions of Linux as many of the components in our design are used daily in the embedded, and server markets.

CATWEASEL MK IV



Access Amiga format floppy disks with the Catweasel MK4 interface.

This PCI card connects to a floppy drive and allows reading/writing to Amiga floppy disks

Ideal for WinUAE/Amiga Forever.

Shipped with drivers for Windows - many other platform drivers are in development from third party suppliers.

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Subway attaches to the clockport internally. Fully registered USB Stack is included.

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80GB IDE HARD DISK



Upgrade your AmigaOne with this great 80GB hard disk.

The drive can be partitioned and formatted on request ready for AmigaOS installation.

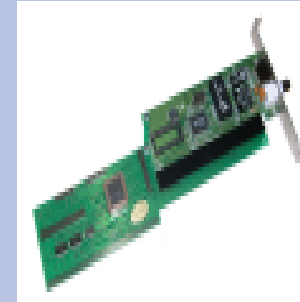
Drive is 3.5" IDE, 7200RPM with 8MB Cache.

We now offer various additional services such as Linux installation - please see www.amigakit.com for costs.

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£44.99

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Get your big box Amiga connected with this Zorro network card.

Now your Amiga can share files with other networked computers (PCs & Macs)

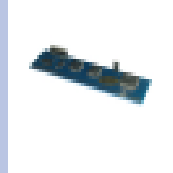
It can also share a broadband network connection.

Features RJ-45 and BNC connection. Ideal for A1200 with Zorro, A2000, A3000 & A4000

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£73.99

KICKFLASH OS4 (ZORRO)



Kickflash is a Zorro card that can be used with any big box Amiga.

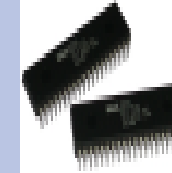
The basic version comes with 1Mb Flash memory (upgradable to 1GB)

A Kickstart image can be copied into the Flash memory for a quicker boot.

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£24.99

KICKSTART 3.1 ROMS (A1200)



Upgrade your Amiga to the latest Kickstart ROM chips in order to use AmigaOS 3.1, 3.5 and 3.9

Many different ROMs now in stock for the full Classic Amiga range - check www.amigakit.com for details

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2.5" HARD DISK (4GB)



This 2.5" hard disk is ideal for the A600 or A1200.

It is supplied fully formatted and partitioned. All 2.5" drives that we supply are preloaded with OSInstall program that makes installation easier

Many other hard disks in stock.

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BLIZZARD SCSI-IV KIT



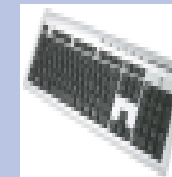
The SCSI expansion kit for the Blizzard 1230-IV / 1240 and 1260 accelerators. Fits onto the expansion connector on these boards.

Also features an additional SIMM socket which will take up to 128MB extra memory.

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£59.99

LOGITECH ULTRA-X



The Ultra-X keyboard is a stylish silver design with laptop style keys.

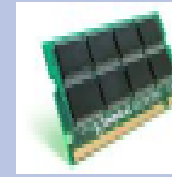
For users who want a quality keyboard that is aesthetically pleasing to look at.

USB/PS2 fitting- ideal for AmigaOne or A1200/A4000 with Lyra adapter.

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512MB RAM (µAmigaOne)



Give your Micro AmigaOne 512MB of memory with this upgrade.

Tested on the Micro AmigaOne before delivery and comes with specific fitting instructions.

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Lyra keyboard interface connects over a chip on the A1200 motherboard and permits an external Amiga or PC keyboard to be attached.

Ideal for tower projects, the keyboard connector is mounted on a backplane

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Now your A3000/A4000 can use standard PS/2 keyboards with this adapter cable.

We stock a range of keyboards.

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Use clockport expansions on your Amiga A600 such as the Silver Surfer and Subway USB.

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Features

Amiga OS 4 Update

By Mick Sutton and
Robert Williams

The OS 4 team have been fairly quiet since the release of update 3 and the Intuition update (more on that later). However we can assure you that a great deal of work is going on behind the scenes as the developers and beta testers work towards the official release. At the Big Bash 3 show in September AmiUpdate, written by Simon "Rigo" Archer, was revealed to the public and we're pleased to be able to bring you details of this useful program.

AmiUpdate

AmiUpdate is a utility which scans your system files and compares them with a database of the latest files available held on a server. The files are checked on version number and file date, any outdated files are listed in the AmiUpdate interface. You can get information on each file to find out what version you currently have and what updated version is available.

Now comes the clever bit! In the list you can de-select any files you don't want to update, and then automatically update all the rest. During this process AmiUpdate will download the upgrade archives via FTP, prompting you to log on to the FTP server if required, downloading from web sites is also supported. The log on details are saved so you only have to enter them once. As a further level of security the archives can be encrypted with PGP (Pretty Good Privacy, an open source encryption package) and AmiUpdate will automatically decrypt them after you enter your pass phrase.

If the author has included a special "Auto_install" script in their archive then AmiUpdate can install the updated files automatically. Archives that don't include this script are saved for manual installation.

OS 4 beta testers have been using AmiUpdate for many



Draggable screens in action: Workbench, ImageFX and Battle for Wesnoth.

months to keep their systems up to date. It has proved invaluable just as a means of making sure your system has all the latest files and it also makes installing the updated files that are released most days much easier.

In our opinion AmiUpdate could be an important asset to "ordinary" OS 4 users when it is

complements AmiUpdate and gives OS 4 this feature. When developers create the "Auto_Install" script to install their program or OS component, they can include a call which records the installation and backs up a copy of the files that will be overwritten. System_RollBack displays a list of dates when updates were performed and

"AmiUpdate has proved invaluable... making sure your system has all the latest files"

released. It would enable users to easily keep their operating system bang up to date and could also be extended to include important third-party files (such as MUI custom classes, libraries or datatypes).

Rollback

Another feature that is common on other operating systems is the ability to "rollback" operating system updates and software installations. A new System_RollBack utility

selecting one shows all the packages that were installed on that date. You can get information on a package to see the files it contains and rollback to automatically replace the files with the earlier versions. For beta testers, rollback is sure to be very useful as it makes identifying problem components a much quicker process. For users of OS 4 final, we can see that the ability to rollback could be very useful on the rare occasions when an update causes problems.

Intuition Draggable Screens Return

One of the features that differentiates the Amiga OS from other operating systems is the concept of independent screens. On "classic" Amigas, running individual programs on a screen with a suitable resolution and colour depth enabled you to take best advantage of the limited resources available. For example you could run a graphics program in a HAM screenmode while leaving workbench in a faster and less memory intensive mode. With modern graphics cards we are no longer so limited and many people choose to run their Workbench in high or true colour. However screens are still very useful in that they enable you to reduce desktop clutter by running multi-window programs on their own screen.

One of the features of the original Amiga hardware, that became a signature of the

system, was the ability to pull down the front screen and see the other screens, regardless of their screenmode, running "behind". When graphics cards began to be developed the off-the-shelf chips used didn't support the screen-drag feature in hardware so graphics driver developers either didn't support screen dragging (Picasso 96) or only supported it to a limited extent (CyberGraphX).

Hyperion have recently announced that screen dragging has returned! The feature was recently added to the intuition.library and released to beta testers (but not yet to other AmigaOne users). Screen dragging in OS 4 is integrated into the OS and works almost exactly as it did on a classic Amiga. You can drag down each screen, revealing the screen or screens behind and interact with the programs running on the visible portion of each screen. The only limitation is that all the screens displayed must be at the same colour depth (all 24bit or all 16bit for example). Hyperion have enhanced the screen drag function by allowing icons to be dragged from the Workbench screen onto applications running on other screens, this was never possible in earlier OS versions. When you drag an icon onto another screen the mouse pointer changes into a downward pointing arrow when you are over an area where the icon can be dropped or an "X" if it cannot be dropped.

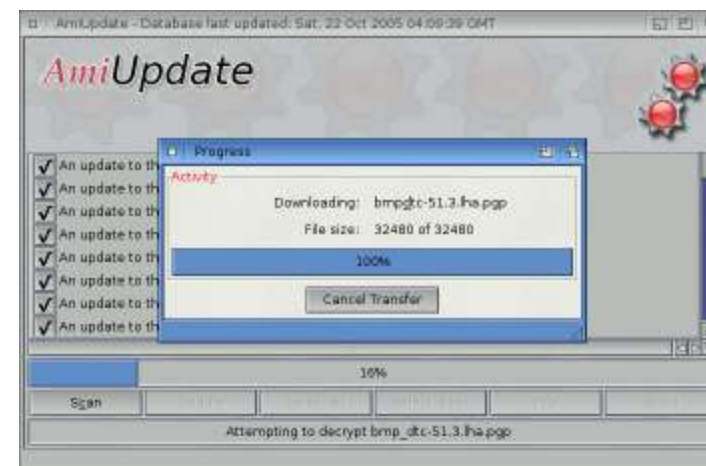
GUI Themes

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Amiga's launch Hyperion released an update to the intuition.library

supplied with update 3, which allows more complex GUI themes to be created. With the library are 4 new themes which demonstrate the new features as well as looking good! One of the new capabilities of Intuition is to make parts of the window border transparent, this is shown to good effect in the Atez theme where window title bars form a "tab" at the left of the window. Less radically, this feature could be used to create windows with rounded corners. Each theme can be tested by double clicking its icon, if you want to keep the changes then double click the "Save Theme" icon. Since the update was released, a number of themes have been uploaded to OS4Depot and IntuitionBase for OS 4 pre-release users to try.

Keep on Scrollin'

It is now almost impossible to buy a mouse without a scroll wheel of some kind, but until recently OS 4 only supported wheels on USB mice. In the recent releases to beta testers, this limitation has been removed and scroll wheels on PS/2 mice are now supported. Under OS 3.x scroll wheel support was "hacked" into the OS by third-party developers without access to the internals. With OS 4, Hyperion have taken the opportunity to define a new scroll wheel API (Application Programming Interface). This means applications must use the new API to support scroll wheels in OS 4. At the time of writing the new API is already supported by Workbench and MUI, meaning you can scroll Workbench volume and drawer windows and in programs like YAM and IBrowse using your wheel.



AmiUpdate updating a beta installation of OS 4.
This progress bar is displayed as updates are downloaded.

OS 4 Tips

Setting Filetype Defaults

The DefIcons utility supplied with OS 4 (and OS 3.9) gives files without a real icon (.info) a default icon based on their filetype when you are showing "all files". The default tool set in the default icon for the file type, which is stored in the ENVARC:Sys/ drawer, is used to open the file when you open one of these icons. If you want to change the default tool the obvious thing is to go into ENVARC:Sys/ and change the icon... but there is an easier way!

Find a file of the type whose default icon you want to change, select it and choose "Information" from the "Icons" menu. For this example I'm going to use a JPEG image file. In the "Information" window go to the "Icon" tab and set the "Default Tool" to the program you want to open this type of file in future. Then, rather than saving your changes (which would write a "real" icon for this file only), select "Save as default jpeg" from the "Project" menu. This will update the default icon.

Screen Activation

Have you ever noticed that when you swap to another screen the current window retains the focus? This means that, for example, if you have Notepad running on Workbench, swap to say Final Writer running on another screen and start typing without clicking in the Final Writer window your input will still go to Notepad. This has

been a feature of the Amiga's user interface for years and can lead to annoying errors.

On older OS versions you could run a hack (like the one included in MCP) to force the operating system to select the last active window on a screen when you swap to it. This function is now built into OS 4 so you don't have to run a hack. To activate it tick the "Frontscreen activation" box in the "Controls" subsystem.

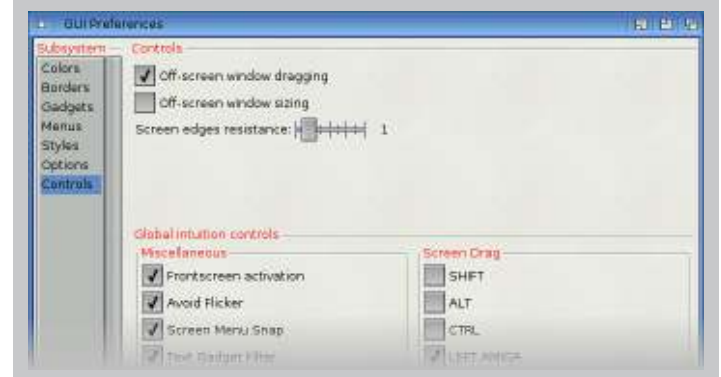
ContextMenu Configuration

The ContextMenus commodity significantly enhances the usability of Workbench by putting commands appropriate to the file, drawer or window under the pointer just a mouse click away. While there isn't yet a preferences program to enable you to modify the options shown in the context menus, the program does read a text configuration file called ENV:ContextMenu.cfg that can be edited.

Depending on the version of OS 4 you have, you may or may not have a sample config file installed; if no file exists the program simply uses its internal defaults.

There's not room to explain all the options here, but the author of ContextMenus has posted a sample config file and an explanation of the syntax to the following thread on AmigaWorld.net:

http://amigaworld.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id=9314&forum=14



Features

MorphOS Update

After a quiet spell, the MorphOS team released two major products in one week... Sam Byford tells us more.

We thought everything had gone too quiet, and that this meant that no progress was being made. In actual fact it would seem that the MorphOS developers have dropped back into the “we will only announce things when there is actually something to announce” mentality. A lot of people prefer this to the “bragging about things to come, that never appear” (vapourware) approach.

Two major things recently happened within a week of each other: MorphOS 1.4.5 was released for Classic machines running PPCs, called MOSPUP (MorphOS for PowerUP); and a 3D driver package was released for MOS 1.4.5 which has caused an influx of new 3D games to be released/ported. Behind the scenes the Ambient developers have also been continuing with their improvements to the system though most of this is under-the-bonnet stuff so I will leave the update on Ambient for the next issue when something more substantial is available.

MOS for PowerUP

On the 24th August 2005, five years after the initial release of MorphOS (which started life on the PPCs but was never fully realised on them), the team released their secret project to the masses. Designed to run on

Classic Amiga 3/4000s with CyberStormPPCs; 1200s with BlizzardPPCs and GRex equipped machines it means that even more people can appreciate the “other” new OS that’s available to Amigans. The UK Amiga scene has been rather one-sided up until now, with the AmigaOne and OS 4 dominating. Now that the AmigaOne hardware has become, for the

“Quake III certainly went down a storm at the BigBash 3 show where I had many people gawping at the speed”

time-being at least, hard to buy I am hoping that more people will buy a Pegasos, or download MorphOS for their PPC Classic.

MOSPUP will work on any of the Permedia2 or Permedia2V graphics cards, which means the BVisionPPC and the CyberVisionPPC. It will also run on any PCI card plugged into the GREX expansion that uses the SiS6326/SiS305 or Voodoo 3, 4 or 5 series chipsets. AGA will not work with MOSPUP, and neither will the Mediator expansion card.

Elbox’s official statement on getting MOSPUP working with their Mediator solution states that “...if only Amiga OS emulation in this MOS version were done well enough, so that the Picasso 96 system can work,

you should be able to use our Voodoo drivers (and drivers for other PCI cards) for MEDIATOR.”. However CISC, one of the main developers of MorphOS stated in reply that, “Like I’ve said before, this has absolutely nothing to do with emulation .. MorphOS has CyberGraphX built-in, and loading P96 on top of that will result in an awful mess that will

never work...”. So it would seem that until a set of CGFX drivers for Mediator are created there will be no Mediator support.

MOSPUP is downloaded as a CD image (.iso) from the MorphOS team’s PowerUP web site (details in info box) and, once written to CD, can either be booted from the CD or installed to your hard drive and run from there. Booting from CD involves copying the “Boot/” directory to your hard drive (e.g. Programs:MorphOS/Boot/), doing a hard reboot to totally clear the memory and then bringing up the no startup-sequence CLI and typing:

```
> cd Programs:MorphOS/Boot
```

```
> startup hal=roms/hal.com1
kernel=roms/kernel.com1
abox=roms/abox2.com1
module=roms/module.com1
resetlevel=1 ramdebug
verbose debug EDebugFlags=
“NoLogServer NoLogWindow”
sumkick disabledelay=1
extmodules=extmodules/#!?
nokickstart >NIL:
```

This will load all the data that would normally be placed into memory upon boot up (such as paths, residents etc.) and then load MorphOS itself. “Resetlevel” will need to be altered depending on your hardware, on a BlizzardPPC this is usually 1, and on a CyberStormPPC it is usually 5 (this is explained fully in the s:startup-sequence file).

“Ramdebug” tells MOS to send any debug output to Ram: instead of the serial port where it can then be turned into a text file using the “C:GetRamDebug” command from shell and read in any text viewer.

Installing to hard drive is even easier! Create a bootable partition, giving it a low boot priority so that your normal Amiga OS will boot first if you don’t interrupt the boot process (you can change this later to make MOS the default OS if you want) and then copy all the files from the CD to the partition. You then need to launch a text editor and edit the file in “s/startup-sequence”. The first part of the file explains how to set the computer up so that it still loads the Amiga’s Kickstart contents (this is optional). The second part of the text file is the important part - it tells the computer where all the MOS files are. Change DH1 to the relevant partition name, this must not be the Volume name.

```
Set bootdevice
“bootdevice=DH1:”
```

The third section is the resetlevel command as described above. Once those three sections have been edited, save the file back to hard drive and then reboot, going into the early startup menu and selecting the MorphOS partition to boot from. A few seconds later MorphOS 1.4.5 should boot up, if not then you may have to play with the resetlevel number and try again.

Once you have installed and booted MorphOS (MOSPUP) it should be registered, otherwise it will “timeout” after two hours and will slow down considerably. To do this you will need to install a TCP/IP program. Currently this means either one of the two 68k stacks (Miami or Genesis) or the PPC Stack ezTCP which is currently at beta version 0.11 and is available from MorphZone (see “Links” box). ezTCP is currently CLI (Command Line Interface) only but a GUI will be available in version 1. Once you are on-line you should run the



Quake III running on Sam’s Pegasos 2 at BigBash 3!

RegTool utility that is in the root directory of MorphOS.

MOSPUP is currently on the second release version and now has updated Voodoo 2D drivers, Voodoo 3D drivers, a default boot screenmode of 800x600 at 60Hz and Paula audio (56kHz) enabled. It should be noted that this version of MorphOS does not come with technical support from the developers. If you need help with any part of MOSPUP then visit the MorphZone web site and load up the forums, where they have dedicated a forum to MorphOS for PowerUP. Also, should you feel that the work of the MorphOS team deserves rewarding, you can donate money in Euro through PayPal by visiting the PayPal site and searching for “MorphOS 1.4.5 for PowerUP”.

I do not own a PPC equipped Classic Amiga and am therefore unable to test MOSPUP, so I am now asking the TA readership for a volunteer to install MOSPUP on their system and to write a tutorial or review for the next edition of our magazine. Anyone willing to take up that mantle should contact our editor (details on the inside front cover).

3D Drivers

The other major news for MorphOS users is the availability of 3D drivers for the older Radeon series of cards. Until now only the Voodoo cards had 3D capabilities via Warp3D and TinyGL. The driver package was released on the 27th August and

is available to anyone who has registered MorphOS, and can only be downloaded from the software FTP site, details of which are sent to each user upon registration or whenever a major update like this is released (also on <http://3d.morphos-team.net>). Installation is as simple as unarchiving the MorphOS3DUpdate.lha file and running the Install script by double clicking the icon. The install time taken is about equivalent to that of the blink of an eye while the reboot required after installation takes a lot longer! (This is actually one thing I really like about OS 4 - the almost instant warm reboot)

TinyGL is a version of OpenGL which has been ported and cleaned up for MorphOS. To quote from the news item: “TinyGL library is heavily optimised and special care has been taken to improve the OpenGL compliance. It now offers an extended set of advanced features including cubic mapping, display lists, stencil buffering, multitexturing, mipmapping, palette texture handling, non-blocking rendering (no context locking is required), compiled vertex arrays, user clipping planes, selection buffer, evaluators, a GLUT implementation and much more.”

Basically this means that more 3D programs should run, with less errors and more visual effects. It will also use more of the hardware that is found on the Radeon card so that less is done

in software and will therefore make programs run an awful lot smoother and faster. The following Voodoo and Radeon cards are now supported:

On all MorphOS capable machines (Pegasos1 and 2 as well as PowerUP machines): 3Dfx Avenger (Voodoo 3) 3Dfx Napalm (Voodoo 4 and Voodoo 5)

On Pegasos 1 and 2 machines but not on PowerUP: ATI rv100 (Radeon 7000 and Radeon VE) ATI r100 (Radeon 7200) ATI rv200 (Radeon 7500)

On Pegasos 2 machines only: ATI r200 (Radeon 8500 and Radeon 9100) ATI rv250 (Radeon 9000) ATI rv280 (Radeon 9200 and Radeon 9250)

The 3D drivers require MorphOS 1.4.5 to run and I can honestly say they work great! All of the 3D games that I have tried to run worked fine, and some even surpassed my expectations. Quake III certainly went down a storm at the BigBash 3 show where I had many people

3D Games

Here is a small list showing some of the 3D games that now work on MorphOS and where to download them:

Quake III (requires Q3 CD)
<http://bigfoot.morphos-team.net/files/morphosquake3.lha>
Wipeout2097 (requires CD)
Commercial, available from Amiga dealers.
SuperTux
<http://www.morphzone.org/modules/mydownloads/singlefile.php?lid=249>
FreeSpace (Demo)
<http://www.hyperion-entertainment.biz:8080/amiga>
GLHexen2 (requires Hexen CD)
<http://www.binaryriot.com/kiero/GLHexen2.lha>
Neverball and Neverputt
<http://www.binaryriot.com/kiero/Neverball.lha>
Descent II
<http://www.lehtoranta.net/powersdl/DescentII.lha>
APool-GL
<http://www.lehtoranta.net/powersdl/APool-GL.lha>
RoadFighter
<http://www.morphzone.org/modules/mydownloads/singlefile.php?lid=251>
AlienBlaster
<http://www.morphzone.org/modules/mydownloads/singlefile.php?lid=212>
Don Ceferino Hazaña
<http://www.morphzone.org/modules/mydownloads/singlefile.php?lid=306>
LMarbles
<http://www.morphzone.org/modules/mydownloads/singlefile.php?lid=209>

Plus many, many more ports of SDL games!

Links

MorphOS Free Edition for “Classic” Amigas with PowerUP cards:
<http://powerup.morphos-team.net/>

MorphZone.org forum for MOS PowerUP:
http://www.morphzone.org/modules/newbb_plus/viewforum.php?forum=42

PPC native TCP/IP stack (beta) ezTCP v0.11 on MorphZone:
<http://www.morphzone.org/modules/mydownloads/singlefile.php?lid=334>

MorphOS 3D drivers web site:
<http://3d.morphos-team.net/>

Thread on MorphZone.org referring to Mediator support:
http://www.morphzone.org/modules/newbb_plus/viewtopic.php?topic_id=3960&forum=42

Big Bash 3

Show Report

The third edition of Big Bash really lived up to its name with more exhibitors, bigger prizes and an excellent turnout. If you couldn't make it along, find out just what went on in Robert Williams' report.

There's no question that the Amiga market has shrunk in recent years and this has led to smaller Amiga shows. For the show visitor this is not necessarily a bad thing as such shows tend to be much friendlier events with a nice balance of socialising, product demos and bargain prices. The Big Bash series of events held in Peterborough are an excellent example of this new "breed" of show.

The third Big Bash was held on the 24th of September and unlike previous 'bashes', it took place during the afternoon rather than in the evening. The new time slot meant that visitors travelling to the show could reasonably come "for the day" without having to find their way home late at night. Setup for exhibitors started at about 11:00 and it was soon clear that there was going to be far more to see and do than at the two previous events. The venue, a medium sized community hall, was packed out with vendors displaying

their wares and Amiga user groups demoing their systems.

The "big names" of the UK Amiga scene were in attendance in the form of Stellar Dreams and AmigaKit.com. Sadly Sven of Stellar Dreams had been unable to procure any Micro AmigaOne boards in time for the event but he did have one XE system. Sven also had ImageFX, Aladdin 4D at special show prices and a number of A1200 Magic packs and CD32s all in mint condition. AmigaKit have burst onto the UK scene in the last year and had a wide variety of stock on display on their table. Prominently on display were the new Elbox D-Box tower (Elbox's latest A1200 tower conversion kit especially suited to their Mediator and forthcoming Dragon bus boards) and AmigaKit's adventure game packs (such as Broken Sword and Day of the Tentacle). Matthew Leaman of AmigaKit was on hand to offer advice on their products and to meet his customers in



Elliott and Nigel at the SEAL table. On display are copies of Total Amiga (of course) and AmigaOnes belonging to Mick and Nigel. Mick's machine was used to demo Epistula & AmiPodder.

person, something that's becoming rare in these days of e-commerce.

Darren "Ryu" Glenn and the Scunthorpe user group had a whole collection of machines on their stand including an A1200 with Blizzard PPC running OS 4. Ryu also brought along his CD32 and the sound of its startup chimes was often heard across the hall. Severin had a beta version of the much awaited IBrowse 2.4 running on his AmigaOne and it was great to see the new version in action including the handy "open in background tab" feature and OS4 native Javascript library (the rest of the application remains 68K). Sadly, although there was a show network, Severin's machine didn't want to connect so he was limited to browsing pages from his hard disk or CDs and so couldn't demonstrate the new Flash plug-in or any pages with extensive Javascript.

Amber-Inc, a new vendor selling Amiga and MorphOS products also had a table. They had at least one Pegasos II board which I understand was auctioned to the highest bidder during the show.

Also at the show were the Fellbrigg user group and the Midlands Amiga Group both of whom had AmigaOne systems on display. There were also a few individual users showing off their systems and selling second hand gear.

SEAL turned out in force for the show with Mick Sutton, Nigel Derbyshire, Sam Byford, Elliott Bird and myself all coming along for the ride. On our table we sold the current issue of Total Amiga as well as back issues and subscriptions. The SEAL team and in particular Nigel and Elliott did a fantastic job in promoting the magazine to passing punters. It was interesting to meet both long-term readers and some



The venue was packed for the whole duration of the show with a great selection of exhibitors and a pleasing number of visitors.

people who were new to the magazine too. Mick's AmigaOne was running on the SEAL table and was used for a number of demonstrations. The latest development version of OS 4, complete with draggable screens, caused a great deal of interest. He also had the first OS 4 native version of Epistula, Daniel "Slash" Allsop's instant messaging client, on display. When people expressed an interest, I was able to use Mick's machine to demo the latest version of my podcast utility, AmiPodder.

On the other SEAL table, Sam set up his Pegasos II system and wowed the crowds with the MorphOS port of Quake III amongst other impressive demos. Soon after Sam had got things going he was joined by a second Pegasos (this time a Mk I) brought along by show visitors called Darren, so with Amber-Inc there was a reasonable MorphOS presence at the show.

An excellent feature of Big Bash 3 was the Amiga Medic centre where visitors could bring along their Amiga and get expert help and advice. The centre was housed on tables in the centre of the hall and was busy throughout the show. Many people got help with their AmigaOnes for example by getting the latest OS updates installed or being upgraded to

the Si0680 UDMA IDE card which was available to buy from AmigaKit at the show.

Nigel from SEAL brought along his AmigaOne system, in its eye-catching clear perspex case, hoping to get help

been posted on the Troika web site (which was accessible via the show network).

During the show an excellent buffet was available, and understandably it disappeared very quickly! There was also

"such shows tend to be much friendlier events with a nice balance of socialising, product demos and bargain prices."

changing his CPU fan. The board was supplied with a tiny 50mm fan on its heat-sink which was very noisy, and Mick had supplied a Thermaltake Blue Orb fan to replace it. The Medic Centre guys soon had Nigel's machine in pieces and despite a number of power cuts during the process the fan replacement went smoothly.

Much of the talk at the show related to the new Amy'05 PPC motherboard (see our special News feature in this issue for more information) for OS 4 from Troika. Prior to the show, the company had announced that the board would be displayed at Big Bash 3. Sadly due to delayed parts and some personal circumstances the board was not ready in time for the show and nobody from Troika was able to attend. While this was disappointing, additional information on the Amy'05 board was available on posters at the show and has

a 17 inch TFT monitor and a 200GB hard disk, amazingly valuable prizes for a relatively small show!

Despite the disappointment over Troika, Big Bash 3 was a resounding success with an excellent turn out of around 80 visitors, which was a big improvement over number 2 held earlier this year. The move of the show time to the afternoon made it much easier for people to attend just for the day and those who wanted to could stay for a meal afterwards. I'm sure the attendance was also helped by the excellent publicity in the run-up to the show. All in all the show was extremely lively and the 5 hours went very quickly.

Our thanks go to Paul (The_Editor on AmigaWorld), Michael Carrillo and everyone involved with the show for an excellent event!



At shows like Big Bash, visitors get the chance to actually try out the hardware and software on display.



AmigaKit.com had a well chosen selection of products including the new D-Box A1200 tower and Si0680 UDMA IDE controllers.

Amigathering 6

Show Report

Excessive summer heat, ice-cold beer, Amigas and Greeks! George Sokianos invites you to enter Amigathering 6!

The Amigathering was born back in 1997 after a few IRC users decided to meet each other. Most of all it is a party instead of a computer show. It is happening almost every year in various places and towns around Greece. Whoever wants to attend can bring their Amiga or any other equipment that quite often include guitars and amps. Most people that attend this party are members of the Hellenic Amiga User Group (HAUG).

On the 23rd and 24th of July the Amigathering 6 took place at Thessaloniki. The party was hosted by Amimac, a shop that specializes in Apple computers, owned by StormLord – an avid Amiga user and hardware hacker. I traveled to Thessaloniki from Athens by car, along with two good friends Kreator and Amigo, on 22nd of July, one day before the party. We left right after our work finished, and after seven whole hours of driving, with the necessary break for eating a long time needed souvlaki at a town called Larissa, we managed to get to the place around 11:30 pm; a few people were already there waiting for us. We moved

the equipment into the shop and helped set up the place for the event. We finished around 02:00 am and we went for a cold refreshing beer.

The party started at around 12:00 noon on Saturday with a few guys attending with their computers. Kreator brought a Pegasos I, an A3000 and an A1200, MrZammler an A3000, Torus an A4000T, HardcoreGR and Seac their A1200s, Animagic an A1000, while I brought my micro AmigaOne as well as some issues of Total Amiga that were on display throughout the show, drawing quite an attention as it's been a while since Amiga magazines were available in Greece.

We set up the remaining computers that we didn't manage to do the night before. We connected to a projector an A1200 with quite a lot of games and demos installed on its hard drive because the A4000T needed a clean installation of OS3.9 as the system drive broke down a few days before. At the same time a lot of people kept coming to the place; quite a few of them we'd never met before – old-time Amiga users, demo sceners, Mac users, bikers and others.



Celebrating the Amiga's 20th anniversary, a classic A1000 and the Boing! ball cake.

As this is a free party, there was no schedule and many things were happening at the same time – the A1200 connected to the projector was playing demos while people were fiddling with their computers, until someone yelled something about a Sensible Soccer championship. So we grabbed our joysticks for a good game.

At around 04:30 pm, despite the extreme heat and humidity, StormLord lit a fire and the

lot of questions to fellow Amiga users most of whom showed a strong interest in it.

I had the opportunity to use for a while the Pegasos I. The basic installation of MorphOS 1.1 with no extra applications that this computer had, made me think that I should wait for AMiGR, guru on MorphOS and other tech-things. He was going to make a clean installation on the Pegasos of the latest, at that time, MorphOS 1.4.5 and after that a

"Amigathering 6... reminded us... that computing can be fun!"

barbecue-fest was on! Lots of steaks and sausages were laid on the grill and there was more beer than most can handle to help us pave the way to our first coronary.

Meanwhile, Midwan and MrZammler were trying to install OS3.9 on Kreator's A3000, but it wasn't such an easy task as it should be, because something was wrong with the SCSI ROM. As the Sensible Soccer championship was going on, I was by my micro AmigaOne answering a

presentation. He arrived around 06:00 pm, bringing along his electric guitar, and as soon as possible he started to download the new MorphOS ISO image. At the same time I was showing to everyone the new classic theme for Amiga OS 4, which brought a few nostalgic smiles to our faces. The 20th anniversary themes were really great, and many of us loved them.

Around 10:00 pm StormLord had a big surprise for us! He brought a big birthday cake



Classic Amigas weren't ignored, here are two A3000s.

coloured like a boing ball, with 20 candlesticks and a "20" copper-effect-colored candle in the middle. We laid the cake right beside the full working A1000. After the "Happy Birthday" song and the necessary photos, we all together put the candles out. Of course we ate all that cake which was delicious. At that time around 30 people were in the place of Amigathering, which is a great number.

It was time for the Amiga OS 4 on micro AmigaOne presentation. I hooked the computer to a projector and opened the cover so that everyone could take a look into the small tower. This was the last micro AmigaOne that GGS-Data (of Sweden) had in stock and I would like to thank them for helping me get around a few issues I had with it.

After talking about the hardware for a few minutes, I unpacked a new 80GB Western Digital hard drive and connected it to the Amiga. I started a fresh installation of OS 4 on it so that people could

see how fast and simple a task it is. I kept on answering questions, with the priceless help of AMiGR, about this AmigaOne model, while the installation was in progress. Ten minutes later the system was ready to go. First I swapped the new drive with the old one as it had many applications already installed.

Everyone loved the boot time, after a cold or warm reset. It was a pity that the projector was too slow to switch screens, so people saw a five second warm boot time while in reality it was only three. After that I demonstrated OS4's new features and all the things that we have seen in various videos and screenshots on the Internet such as Roadshow, AmiDock, the new Prefs GUI and commodities. Next up were lots of 68k and WarpUp programs like ArtEffect 4, Photogenics 5, AmigaWriter 2.2, ImageFX 4.5, AmigaAmp, IBrowse 2.3, AmiIRC, AWeb APL and others. I also used the OS 4 native Thumb and PicShow; I rotated and applied

effects to really big photos just to show the speed of doing these things. Unfortunately, I couldn't get the IBrowse 2.4 demo version from the developers, just for the show.

The thing that most people wanted to see was the AmigaOne's video playback capabilities. So I used MPlayer dirty preview #3 playing a large 640x480 DivX video in a window, while I dragged it around the desktop with no sound glitches or video stop. To stress test things up, I ran MooVid twice, playing two videos while MPlayer was running. Unfortunately GrimReaper popped up giving me the opportunity to show it to the attendees. I killed one instance of MooVid and the second kept on running alongside MPlayer. The great thing was that I did not have to reboot the Amiga during the presentation.

Late at night, around 12:30 am, we left the venue and went for dinner at a traditional Greek tavern. Thereafter some went to sleep and others partied on until early in the morning on a rock bar-boat that sailed near the harbour.

On Sunday the 24th, at around 12:20 pm, a lot of us met again at the Amigathering venue. After the necessary clean up, we switched on our computers and put some music. Around 2:00 pm a lot of people came by. We started a Kick Off contest and then again a Sensible Soccer championship. After that a lot of demos played

on the projector and we really enjoyed it. Unfortunately, around 5:00 pm, people who came from too far away places, had to leave. So we said goodbye to MrZammler, to Prowler213 and many others.

At 7:00 pm, AMiGR started his exceptional presentation of MorphOS and Ambient, running on a Pegasos I, which he set up the night before. He showed us the latest MUI 4 beta and a lot of application demos. I believe that MorphOS needs a lot of things to be as completed as OS 4 is, even in the pre-release version. The most impressive thing in MorphOS is the backward compatibility as we saw a lot of demos and applications running faster and smoother on it. Maybe it is because the system had a Voodoo 3000 graphics card and a JIT 68K emulator running underneath.

Finally, around 11:30 pm we had to say goodbye to Thessaloniki and all our fellow Amigans there, to return to Athens. A 7 hour trip was waiting for us. We left with a lot of things in mind from this year's Amigathering. It was great. Everyone enjoyed it and a lot of people came by. Amigathering 6 was a great experience that reminded us of what the computers we use at the office cannot offer us. The sense of community and the fact that computing can be fun. And I believe that everyone who attended Amigathering 6 feels the same way.



MorphOS being demonstrated on the big screen.



George's µA1-C in a stylish case with a confusing Apple monitor!

An Interview with...

Jamie Krueger

of BitByBit Software LLC

Fact File

Name
Jamie Krueger

Location
Wisconsin, USA

Company
BITbyBIT Software Group LLC
www.bitbybitsoftwaregroup.com

First off, who is Jamie Krueger?

He's just this guy that drinks all my Mountain Dew. :)

My answers below will probably tell you more about myself than I can directly, but here are some mundane facts (from the third person), "ah-em":

Born in February, 1970 of largely German and Norwegian descent, Jamie Scott Krueger hails from the north-central part of the United States. A self taught computer programmer and software engineer, his interests include Amiga computers, and everything to do with them, role-playing (3rd Edition D&D mostly) and games, currently Neverwinter Nights. His favourite form of caffeine intake is Mountain Dew (Green).

Jamie recently left his job as Sr. Software Engineer with Eaton Powerware, formally Invensys Powerware, one of the largest UPS (Uninterruptible Power Systems) companies in the world. During Jamie's 10 years with the company, he pioneered new UPS communications technology for their connectivity solutions. This move came shortly after forming BITbyBIT Software Group LLC, a company dedicated to the development of professional visual software creation tools for the AmigaOne and Amiga OS 4 platform.

Jamie has been a computer enthusiast since he was eight years old and an Amiga fan since he got his first Amiga

computer in 1988. He currently owns several Amigas and a good assortment of other computers.

Although an active Amiga user for many years, Jamie first introduced himself and his new company formally in December of last year with the release of The SDK Browser, a powerful new document viewer for accessing the Amiga OS 4 SDK.

When did you first get "hooked" on Amigas?

1988. but my first computer was a Commodore VIC-20 when I was eight years old, it connected to the television directly for its monitor, and did not come with a way to store and reload anything. No datasette, no floppy drive, nothing. So if you wanted to run anything you needed to program it in first (ah, the good old days). Some time later I had talked my parents into getting a datasette drive for the VIC and started writing larger programs in BASIC and then 6502 Assembly. About a year or so later I moved to the Commodore 64 with floppy drive, and then in 1988 I got my first Amiga, an A500. After nearly a decade of living in the 8 bit world, the Amiga was like discovering an entirely new, vast universe to explore, and after more than another decade of exploration I continued to find new and exciting possibilities with the Amiga. I guess that is the real truth of why people still stick with the Amiga, or wish fondly to return to the better world it provides you. At least that is why I'm still here.

For how long have you been a developer, and what spurred this interest?

I am one of a generation of entirely self-taught programmers,

so that is a little hard to say. However, I would say I started serious programming efforts around age twelve, and my professional career as a software engineer about eight years later, so 23 years and counting.

As for what spurred my interest, I would have to say clearly the Amiga itself. I was already fascinated with what I you could do in BASIC and assembly on the 8 bit machines, when I got my first Amiga my world really opened up.

You've made headlines (at least in Total Amiga!) with your developer environment (or, in short, IDE) AVD. Now, first off, what is an IDE?

In the programming world IDE normally stands for Integrated Development Environment.

Traditionally an IDE ties together the keys tools needed to write software today under a common interface, hence "Integrated". This would normally include a text editor, documentation reference tool, some kind of project management, automated build facility and debugging software. Modern IDEs often include graphical interface building tools and other "Visual" tools as well, allowing the more common tasks that are often repeated in each development project, to become a drag 'n drop operation for the programmer, or simply to be done for you by the IDE. Since an IDE normally invokes the actual compiler (GCC, VBCC, etc.) for you as well, you could think of it as a very sophisticated graphical front-end for the compiler.

So what's up with that? Isn't it enough with a text editor and a compiler to start hacking

away? And since OS 4 comes with the power of NotePad just waiting to be unleashed, as well as plenty of megabytes of SDK, why would anyone need an IDE?

Why yes, you can jump right in and start programming on OS 4 using only a text editor, and a shell to run the compiler. If you are an experienced programmer you should be able to get a "hello world" program compiled and running within a couple of minutes, and if you know OS 4 and the ReAction macro language, less than 30 minutes and a couple dozen lines of "C" source code later, you should have a starter program with its own window and maybe a button or two.

OR, using AVD you could select a program template, say a Commodity application with graphical window, a few simple clicks of the integrated GUI Builder to create a simple interface, and then hit "build". The complete source for the program will be produced and compiled automatically into a working application, ready to be filled in with the further assistance of the AVD Suite of visual tools.

Most developers actually know what they want to accomplish when they sit down to work on a new application, and even what the core functionality will need to look like. The whole process of wrapping a window and graphical interface around it, or setting it up as a commodity, structuring the code to support different locales/languages, etc. is just time consuming and normally left to last, if at all. This in turn results in programs that although powerful, can be



Jamie poses for the camera complete with his Amiga cap!

difficult to use or understand by their target audience. This is one of the key things AVD is targeted to solve.

Okay, so "AVD" is more than just notepad++ then, I gather?

AVD, or the Advanced Visual Developer, will provide the user with a powerful and easy to use environment for creative freedom in writing your own software for Amiga OS 4. While it is accurate to compare AVD to IDEs on other platforms, that is merely the starting point for AVD. At this point Amiga developers need the basic tools to help accelerate their efforts and help lessen the learning curve for OS 4 development. A fully functional IDE can and will do this by providing ready-to-build template (or skeleton) applications, putting programming documentation at your fingertips, turning graphical interface development (ReAction GUI Building) into a 100% visual, point and click operation and much more. This is where AVD v1.0 will start.

AVD v2.0 and beyond will push the envelope of what is often called RAD or Rapid Application Development. It will extend AVD v1.0 with a series of plug-in expansion modules, each designed to target specific areas of program creation by providing new tools, source templates, software engines, etc. which greatly ease new developments into these areas. Examples of possible AVD extensions include, but are not limited to, 2D and 3D Game Design, Network software development, Database programming, Office and PIM (Personal Information

Management) development tools, and much, much more.

What gave you the idea to start this project?

The origin of this project actually goes back more than 10 years. It first came about while I was working on my initial effort to write professionally for the Amiga back around 1992. I was writing an arcade "shooter" (the classic top-down style, not first-person stuff of today) entitled "Wildfire". It ran in 512K of memory on a stock 7.14Mhz A500 at 50/60 frames-a-second in either PAL or NTSC resolution, and was written in one hundred percent MC68000 assembler.

In those days professional development groups not only wrote the games themselves, but also all of the tools needed to put these games together. Without such tools as graphic and animation converters, and the level or map builders needed to output the complex raw data which was required by the ever changing software game engines, such arcade level games were nearly impossible to write. Needless to say, any group at the time trying to make a living writing these games, rarely shared these valuable tools of creation. And in fact, most of the tools being developed were so specific to the project at hand (games in particular), effectively sharing them was very difficult.

I found out two very important things while working on the Wildfire project; One, that as cool as writing the game engine itself was, I was having even more fun working on the tools needed to build the levels, graphics and

animation effects for the game. Two, that if you could build the right set of reusable tools, where you could just jump right into an already working project, tailored to your needs, then programming like other forms of art, could focus on the creative and not on the mundane tasks of having to first build your canvas or go mine some marble for your sculpture before you can even begin to let your idea take shape.

Over the years, I have watched my ideas, along with some nice original ones, show up in the new generation of IDEs that were steadily coming out. It would be some time yet before programs like "Visual Studio" come on the scene. However, as good as these tools were becoming, they still fell short of what I really wanted to see and use. Also, the better these tools got, the more expensive they became. It is now common practice for such tools to sell for thousands of (US) dollars per copy. Pricing them way out of the reach of most individuals, and keeping the best tools for the elite groups (namely big software houses and corporations).

We have come a long way over the last decade or so in seeing better tools reach more and more people (thanks mainly to various Open Source projects), but not nearly far enough. The fact still remains that even with the wonderful resource that is the Internet, most projects still die soon after the main idea takes shape because when it comes to putting it on the computer it is just too hard to get off the ground. Heck, for the complete beginner, just getting any program to compile and run, much less one with its own window and graphical interface, can be frustrating enough to give up on programming altogether. We need to take programming your computer to the next level, moving more toward the creative and elegantly functional, while promoting the authoring of higher quality software, and opening the door for everyone along the way.

Am I correct in understanding that your company BITbyBIT Software Group LLC was started with the sole purpose of providing the OS 4 community with an IDE? And, is that a small sign of insanity, or do you have a really intricate business plan with immense long term payoff?

I suppose a small amount of insanity is required in any business venture, but in this case I think faith might be a better word. Yes, BITbyBIT Software Group LLC was formed with one major goal in mind: "To become the defacto standard provider of professional development tools for the Amiga OS 4 community."

From a personal standpoint, this project and its goal represents the culmination of my life's work. Something I believe in strongly enough to have stepped away from a profitable and rapidly growing career as a Senior Software Engineer, to take on the financial risk to achieve. So obviously this is not just about some dream of immense financial payoff at some point in the future. It's about creating something never seen before on this platform or any other. It's about helping others to find the beauty of elegant simplicity and freedom of creativity that the Amiga has always represented.

Ultimately, it's all about giving something back to the platform that has given me so much over the years. So if there is a lack of sanity in there, then it is the Amiga community who will benefit from my dementia.

In addition to yourself, who is involved with this venture?

In the terms of the day-to-day work and the actual development, there is only me at the moment. In the terms of support for my efforts, that list is growing steadily. BITbyBIT will be hiring on more people just as soon as it can afford to do so. Or, when it finds someone else like myself who will tolerate not being paid at start-up!

As a software company, BITbyBIT Software Group LLC is in that critical starting stage of developing its first key saleable product. The only way a start-up company can sustain itself during this period, without financial backing, is by maintaining low overheads until it can grow core income streams.

This IDE is being developed one piece at a time, that is; the various parts of the final AVD product are being released one at a time, as they are completed. How far along are you today, and at which point would you estimate that the full release will be available?

Features

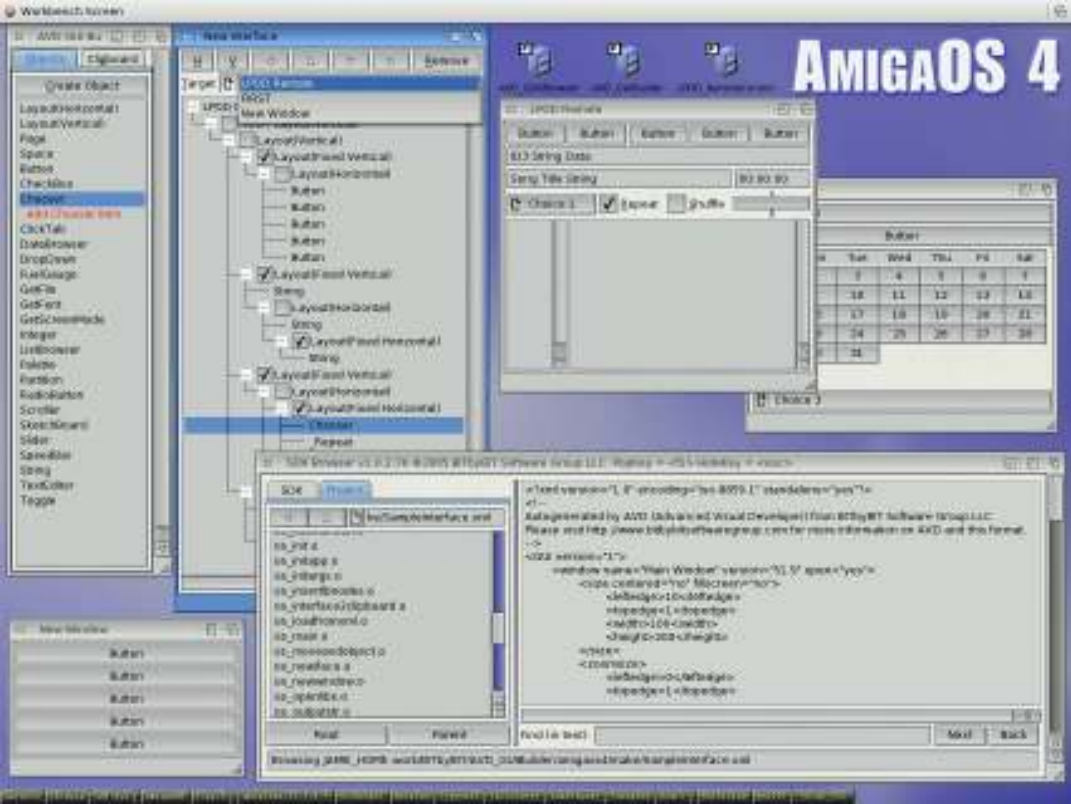
Out of the five core components that make up AVD (Text Editor, GUI Builder, Project Manager, SDK Browser, and Debugger), the SDK Browser (Programming Documentation Viewer) is already very functional and on its way to v2.0 already. The GUI Builder is coming together quickly at this point and should be publicly available some time in October, subscribers should have actual code producing versions within a couple of weeks (or should I say by the time you read this). The other pieces will follow within a few months, leaving the Text Editor component for last since there are some good choices available right now in that area. However, they will never have the level of integration with the rest of AVD as AVD's own Text Editor will, so it is still necessary that AVD includes a Text Editor of its own.

So how does this work for a potential customer? Would you pre-pay and get things on a “when they’re done” basis or do you pay in installments?

The FDSP (Foundation Development Subscription Plan) was initiated to help fund the actual development of AVD itself. It allows the customer to make 12 installments of US \$10.00 a month (US \$120.00 total) to purchase AVD v1.0 (when it is complete), and for access to in-development (stable) releases along the way. So you are not just supporting an initiative to get this very critical software on OS 4, but you are also saving US \$94.75 off the purchase price as compared to waiting and buying each piece one at a time (See more details on the plan on the FDSP section of our web site).

Some people have opted to join the subscription plan, but wanted to pay the US \$120.00 up front, or in two or three installments instead of 12 small ones. This too was acceptable as long as the FDSP was still in effect. The first enrolment period for the FDSP plan was closed on July 1st, 2005. However, a second and perhaps final, opportunity to join this special development subscription plan will begin on October 1st.

The second (and most likely last) enrolment period will remain open from October 1st, 2005 through January 1st, 2006. Although you still pay the exact same total cost of US \$120.00



The current AVD components in action, the GUI Builder and the SDK Browser.

as the first FDSP subscribers are doing now, the terms of the second run of the FDSP are slightly different to match the current state of development. The new subscription plan calls for an initial payment of US \$30.00 for the first month, followed then by 6 more monthly installments of US \$15.00 (to make US \$120.00 Total). Additionally, once the new plan is made available on October 1st, you will also have the option to simply pre-pay the full US \$120.00 in a one time payment.

Will you offer the various components for sale as pick-and-mix components even after the whole shebang is out on the market, or will you just be selling the complete package at that point?

Both. The entire AVD suite, including all major components, will be packaged for sale directly of course, however the stand-alone pieces will remain available for individual purchase. The best value will always be to purchase the complete suite or various other software bundles that will become available as the extensions to AVD are released. But, if you only need one component, say the GUI Builder, you will still be able to purchase the stand-alone version. I can not guarantee however that the stand-alone versions will have all

the same features as the integrated versions do, but that is the goal.

With the components available today, how useful would you say AVD is at present?

In my mind, very useful! For one, the SDK Browser is a wonderful tool in its own right for quickly finding that function or checking that include file, or even reading through example source code. Something most developers, including myself do constantly as they work. With well over 1500 system functions in OS 4 today, you can't remember the exact usage of every function you may need to use. This is where the SDK Browser can find what you need instantly. The best way to see what I am talking about here is to try it for yourself. The SDK Browser v1.0.0.0 is freely available and can be downloaded either from BITbyBIT's website directly, or from <http://os4depot.net>.

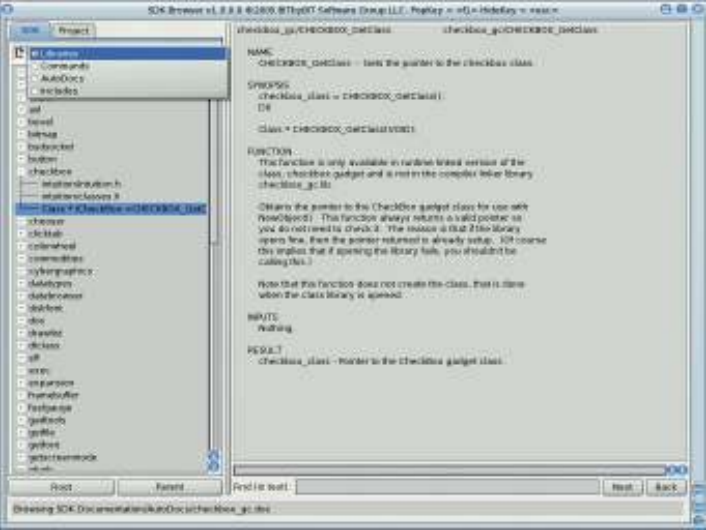
For another the GUI Builder will add a tremendous boost in productivity, not to mention being a great help to the novice or even the professional working with ReAction for the first time. I won't go into any details here, since it is still very much in development as I write this, but you can find more information and early screenshots on our web site. The stand-alone

version of the GUI Builder should be publicly available for sale sometime in October.

Among other things on offer from BITbyBIT, there is the free “AVD Template Project.” Have I comprehended things correctly by assuming that this is more or less a finished GUI ready to be used for any purpose? Pretty much a “skeleton” for an application, just waiting for some useful functionality to be added?

Yes, you are correct, the AVD Template Project provides a working example of an OS 4 application, including setting up as a Commodity, Tooltype/command line parsing, a basic window with a simple button on it, a good example of how to write a Makefile, and much much more.

Beyond that, it also represents the first look at one of the template sources that AVD will produce for you. For example, the GUI Builder will write/update several files within this first template in order to provide a complete, ready to build application which includes the GUI you designed using the builder. As new changes and updates to this template are needed by AVD, the Template Project itself will be updated to remain compatible with the tools. These further updates of the



The SDK Browser was the first AVD component to be released.

AVD Template Project will continue to be released freely, and available for any purpose.

How free is “free”?

Free, no cost, nada, nothing, zip!

In reference to the “AVD Template Project”, yes that is and will continue to be released for free. This means that you may make use of, distribute, and build it in part, or as a whole, into any project for any reason, without any kind of compensation or royalties of any kind. The actual license for use is included with the archive. It outlines only two restrictions; that the original archive remains complete and unaltered, and that BITbyBIT Software Group LLC retains all rights to software itself. So basically BITbyBIT releases the use of this source to you freely, for any purpose, and without compensation, but equally retains the right to sell or use its own software for any purpose as well.

Approximately when do you think we will get to see the other components available and ready to use?

“When it’s done™”! As I’ve said, mature versions of the SDK Browser component are already available, and the GUI Builder should be released sometime in October. The rest of the components will roll out within a few months after that. It’s hard to pin down exactly, but as each new piece of AVD matures, the development of the rest becomes faster and easier. Eventually, all of AVD will be written and maintained on AVD itself, a sign of a truly flexible and mature building system.

How much easier would a developer’s life become with the full release version of AVD as opposed to running an editor and “just” the SDK?

In my opinion, AVD will simply become essential to developing software for OS 4. It will save the professional hours or even weeks of work on each one of their projects, and will save the novice months of time, or what is even more important, encourage them to continue (or even pick up in the first place) their effort to learn to write software for the AmigaOne and OS 4.

One of the goals of AVD is to enable the complete beginner to write their first application, with a graphical interface, that actually does something useful, in five minutes or less. I am happy to say that with the release of the GUI Builder, that goal is very nearly achieved.

Apart from AVD, what else would you recommend to make developing as smooth as possible (apart from an MP3 application and lots of caffeinated beverages)?

Backups. Remember to save often, and make regular archive snapshots of your work and store them somewhere safe. AVD will help with this task eventually as well, with direct support for source code versioning systems like CVS and Subversion.

Are you involved with any other Amiga projects?

Yes! Nothing public as yet, and AVD is my top priority until it is released, but there are always more than a few projects on the list. Remember, I used to write games too!

Features

How many Amigas do you, and BITbyBIT, currently own, and which models?

Wow, ah well, let me see... 18, not counting emulators. 2 AmigaOnes (one XE and one µA1-C), 2 4000Ts (equipped with 060/PPC cards), 3 A1200s, 4 A2000s, 4 A500s, an A4000D, an A3000 and an A1000!

Plus various other machines including PCs, Macs and Linux boxes, just the essentials!

Is the Amiga your main computer?

Yes, I have never stopped using my Amigas daily. I even used an A4000T as my main machine at my previous employers. Ever try to get a corporation to spend \$5000.00 on an Amiga for one of their developers while everyone else is getting cheap PCs? It was fun, but I can tell you that machine paid for itself 1000 times over in what it could do that no other machine in the building could accomplish! Not to mention I used it to write them a piece of software technology that I last heard was valued at over 1.8 million Dollars, so I think they got their money's worth out of it. At least I got to keep the Amiga!

What do you primarily use your Amiga for?

Programming. By far the most common thing I do with them these days is write code. That and I still use my Amithlon box to use ImageFX and of course DOpus Magellan, among tons of other pieces of software that still don't exist on other platforms.

From a development standpoint I rarely ever use just one machine at a time. In fact I normally use at least three. The Amiga(s) for testing and compiling, the Mac for editing, and the Linux server for cross-compiling and running the RAID array that all of my code is centrally stored on. One thing I learned a long time ago was never trust any one machine, or more specifically one hard drive to hold all your work. The advantage of using network based storage solutions can not be over-stressed. Especially when your development target is subject to change or be rebuilt at a moments notice.

Obviously, you must have some faith in the future of the Amiga, with regards to OS 4 and beyond, or you wouldn't

be committing to commercial development for the platform, but where do you think the Amiga will be in five years from now?

Yes, I believe the Amiga and OS 4 have a very bright future ahead of them. I think we will see the Amiga with its powerful yet elegantly small operating system used to solve specific problems with dedicated (and most likely embedded) implementations. Set-top boxes and game consoles are of course good possibilities as well, but I don't think we will ever be limited to just these areas. I personally think there will always be a “desktop” Amiga available in some form. After all, development for embedded targets are not done on the devices themselves, since they normally lack the resources and nice displays for the developer. They are done on desktop machines and workstations.

Equally, I see OS 4 moving to other processors eventually. Most likely something within the PowerPC family at first, but definitely not limited to them. Wherever Amiga OS 4 and beyond move to, BITbyBIT Software Group and AVD will be there to support developing for it.

In the best case scenario imaginable, where do you see BITbyBIT in a few years time? If the Amiga should go flatline (again), can you see yourself sticking with it anyway?

My plans for BITbyBIT Software Group remain the same in both cases. I have been working for more than 15 years to get to this point, and I'm not going away any time soon. Amiga hardware sales will always follow availability of software. All machines, be they computers, game consoles or something in between, are always judged by what they can run, what software you as a customer can get for it. Numbers of hardware sold, and ease of development is what brings developers. More developers means more software, and more software means more hardware sales.

That is why I made it my personal goal in life to significantly increase the number of software titles available for this platform by making it substantially easier to develop for. I want to bring developers back to using the Amiga as their

Features

FIRST machine to write for, because it is not only easier to do but fun as well.

What has been your favourite OS of all time, both from a user's and a developer's perspective? And why?

Clearly Amiga OS is my personal favourite. From a user standpoint the new Amiga machines lack only software. Of course they are also expensive and hard to obtain at times. But it is still very easy to get hooked on the way the Amiga works, at the speed at which they let you do what you want without getting in your way.

I don't think of Amigans as common users though, they are able to deal with things that people who only ever knew Windows for example, are often unable to handle or even understand. Most of the world of computer users today simply accept that their computer will cause them pain and suffering eventually, that that's simply the way things are. They don't know there is a better way to do things, because they have never been exposed to it. From that standpoint, nearly every Amiga owner today is either a member of the "old school" or have been "converted" by one who is. It is easy to look at the Amiga and Amigans as some kind of cult following when you consider just how they came together in the first place. Nearly every Amiga ever sold in the days of Commodore did so not because they had great (or any) advertising campaigns, but that someone in their neighbourhood had one, and they got a chance to see it, or play on it for awhile. Without having a clue as to what was under the hood, the Amiga simply never failed to fascinate.

The same thing holds true today just as it did then, only now the world of advertising has flooded everyone's brain with largely useless or irrelevant information about PCs. A plethora of bland and nearly identical PCs trying desperately to outsell each other based on ever-changing hardware specs. So, now when you try to explain what an Amiga is to someone who has never seen one before, the first thing they ask about is what hardware does it run. Usually followed by something like, "Does it run Windows software?"

It was easier in the old days because all you had to do was

say it was something totally new and custom, and then do two or three or six things at once, pull down the screen to have a peek at the ones behind it, and maybe pop in your favourite arcade quality game. That was it. The next question would be "where do I get one..."

The power and beauty of the machine is largely still there in OS 4, and on its way to new levels of greatness. This again brings me back to, "the new Amiga machines lack only software...", and the importance of making it easy to access the power under the hood of OS 4. This is what AVD is set to help accomplish. If you want to bring new people to the AmigaOne and OS 4, they need to be introduced to the machine as a whole, comparing speed, ease of use, and lack of pain from a Desktop vs Desktop point of view, and not from a hardware spec-sheet basis. New and faster hardware will come in time, but what can be accomplished with Amiga OS 4 on the existing hardware is amazingly vast.

Another seemingly unrealized fact (at least by the computer industry) is that from a software development standpoint, ever-changing hardware on a given platform is not a good thing. By this I mainly mean for you, the customer. An always increasing hardware spec that becomes available to the public too quickly breeds lazy developers and degrades programming skills. Rather than developers getting the chance to master what a given piece of hardware can really do, and figure out how to get the most from the machine as it shipped, they are replaced by the next greatest thing. This has lead to some game companies for example to target not what is available today, but what they expect will be out by the time they are finished writing their software. This leaves the user going back to spend more money on the latest hardware, or even totally replacing their machine way earlier than they should have had to, just because the software they "thought" it would be able to run, won't actually be able to when the software comes out.

This brings us back to the advantage of owning an Amiga over a normal PC, yes they

seem to be more expensive for what you get hardware wise, and maybe they are, but when you consider that your new Amiga is actually **over** powered for most applications, and that every piece of Amiga software likely to come out for the new machines will run on every one of the new Amigas and not just the models with the latest hardware, then you can see more value for your money. The OS simply doesn't need that much hardware to run smoothly. Nice to have, sure, faster RAM and bigger CPU to me means faster compile times. But for most of the applications that will be run on these machines faster hardware is only a bonus, not a necessity.

Having said that (*stepping down from my soapbox*) I have used nearly every type of machine and operating system over the years, and each one has its advantages and disadvantages. So it will always come down to personal choice. Here is is what I normally recommend to people today:

1. If they can handle owning an AmigaOne, can afford it, and can find one, I try to show them exactly what you can expect to be able to do, now and in the future. If they are a developer, I stress the coolness of OS 4 and the awesome opportunities that a niche platform like the AmigaOne/OS 4 can offer a programmer looking to find an outlet for their work. Let's face it, you guys are much more receptive to cool new software from an unknown developer than the mass that is Windows, Linux and Mac.

2. If they are a complete novice, with money, and no specific software needs beyond the common stuff of today, I recommend they get any Mac running Mac OS X. In terms of user friendliness with lots of eye candy, combined with limited user control, which equals "hard to break", the current Mac is hard to beat (plus the fact that it runs BSD under the hood makes all the difference).

3. If they are a power user or at least have a more technical nature (greater geek quotient), then I recommend Linux. It can have a friendly enough desktop, certainly has a huge amount of freely available software, and can be trained to run nearly anything, for ever, without stopping or ever being shutdown.

Also, for the programmer it is awesome to have a compiling environment that will not bring the entire machine down if you screw up. This is due mainly to the MMU (Memory Management Unit) that prevents illegal access to the memory of another process (or the OS). OS 4 is nearly there itself now, even with the MMU not enabled by default. However, even though you can still crash the Amiga with broken software, its advantage is you can reboot and be right back again in about five seconds.

Under Linux you can release bad software as "thought to be stable", because the OS is preventing unnoticed bad behaviour. This to me is not a solution, I'd rather my program be able to crash, or at least the OS be able to inform me it had crashed, and has been stopped (this is what OS 4 strives to do). That way I am forced to find the problem and correct it, rather than leave it to become a larger problem in later releases.

4. Only if they have a specific software requirement for which an equivalent replacement will not do, will I recommend Windows. XP Pro, throw out Outlook and Internet Explorer and replace them with Firefox and Thunderbird. Lock it down, protect it from the network, and don't install anything on it that is not both essential and from a verified source (Does this sound how your computing experience should be? I think not).

Anything you'd like to add?

Well, if you or any of your readers managed to read this far, you are more dedicated than I am!

I would like to thank Magnus and Total Amiga Magazine for doing this interview, and to invite everyone to watch for powerful new OS 4 software to be released from BITbyBIT Software Group in the near future. Now, I must get back to writing it!

Get in on the fun, get yourself an AmigaOne!

Thanks to Jamie for supplying such detailed and interesting answers to our questions. Watch out for further coverage of AVD and its applications in future editions of Total Amiga.

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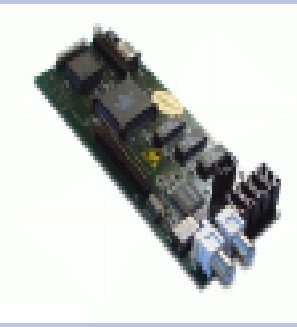
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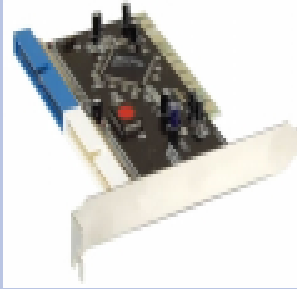
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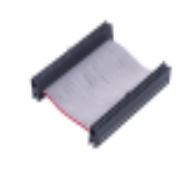
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Features

An Interview with...

The IBrowse Team

Featuring Dave Fisher and David Burstrom

Find out about the long awaited 2.4 and 3.0 releases in Magnus Johnson's interview with two team members.

Fact File

Web pages
IBrowse home page
<http://www.ibrowse-dev.net>

IBrowse mailing list
<http://www.yahogroups.com/group/ibrowse>

Could you tell us a bit about yourselves?

DF: I'm a 31 year old gadget freak that enjoys messing about with computers when I'm not doing other things, such as kayaking, rock climbing, hiking, mountain biking or video editing. I work (officially) as a CAD Supervisor working with ProEngineer doing mechanical design. I also do the network and system support for the department on Windows, Unix and now BSD, as well as some web development and programming in Visual Basic, Perl, and c-sh scripting.

DB: I am a guy in my later twenties, trying to get a good grip on my everyday life. A while ago, I graduated at the Lund Institute of Technology in Sweden, earning myself a Master of Science in Computer Science. My indefinite employer is a consultant company in Malmo, Sweden, for which I am at the moment working with software development at Sony Ericsson in Lund.

My interests are rather broad, ranging from cooking to the Tango, movie watching to martial arts. And of course, the Amiga and software development and design. Since my girlfriend has moved to Gothenburg recently, I guess I'd also pick up driving as a hobby in the near future.

For how long have you been an Amiga-user?

DF: Since December 28th 1989.

DB: About 15 years now.

When did you start developing software?

DF: November 2004! I did some programming in Blitz Basic in the early-mid 90's, and have been translating some of my old c-sh script based in-house applications at work to VB. I also work with Perl a lot on the departmental website, but only started getting interested in C and programming "for real" at the end of last year.

DB: It took some time to get started, what with the large number of great games for the A500. I would say about 10 years ago.

For how long has IBrowse been in development?

DF: For 10 years this year.

When did you become attached to the project, and how did this come about?

DF: January 2000. I basically bought IBrowse 2.0 from the WoA '99 show in London, and it was so buggy I sent loads of bug reports to Stefan. I can't remember if I asked him, or if he asked me, but I then became a beta tester as a result.

DB: That was a few years ago, after 2.2 had been released. Seeing the ever increasing posts about much needed updates on various fora, I asked Stefan if I could get a copy of the source code to start fixing things. This also triggered Stefan to start working with IB again.

What are your responsibilities with IBrowse?

DF: How long's a piece of string?

Primarily I guess the documentation, followed by testing the stuff the other guys add before the beta releases. In addition to that, bugtrack maintainence, bug prioritising, support and feature brainstorming. On the programming side itself, I'm mainly involved with the GUI layout, prefs layout and design, catalog maintainence etc. Pretty much the boring stuff, which is



David Burström at AmiGBG 2005. (Photo by Niels Bache)

fine for me as it frees up the others to do the important work, but gives me enough to do to learn the ropes. The biggest programming achievement I have made in 2.4 is the addition of the context pointers, although both David and Oliver gave me a lot of assistance in pointing me in the right direction and tidying up some of my initial code.

DB: I favour the user interface development, since that was the first part I started looking into. Given a project with a lot of different tasks, if you start developing, the UI is the most tangible to begin with. But I am working my way deep down into the inner workings of IB as time goes by.

My current responsibilities lie with porting IB to PPC and mainly doing IB 3.0 related development.

How many people are involved in developing IBrowse, what are their respective duties?

DF: Stefan Burström - programmer and ultimate decision maker. He is the only

remaining original programmer left with IBrowse. He knows the source inside out and has a very deep understanding of MUI from being a friend of Stefan Stuntz, and having helped port it to OS 4 with Jens Langer.

Oliver Roberts - programmer. Specialises in the javascript support and image decoders, but now has a very broad understanding of the source code having done the majority of the work on 2.4 whilst Stefan has been busy elsewhere.

David Burström - programmer. Mainly working on IBrowse3, but helps out in all areas of IBrowse development really.

Me - I listed my roles above!

Beta Testers - a range of testers on various platforms without whom IBrowse would be a lot more buggy than it is today! Todd Oberly deserves a mention in particular for his meticulous work in debugging various areas, and generally hassling us all (in a good way) to make IBrowse better with each beta release.

What is your main browser today, and why?

DF: That's a very awkward question - I spend half my time at work and half at home - I only use IE6 at work as I don't have an Amiga there! However, at home I would say its probably 60/40 IBrowse2.4 to IE6, and the main reason for that is I surf a lot on my laptop with IE6. When I'm working at my desk, it's more like 95% IB2.4 and 5% IE for the odd site that requires CSS/DOM and so won't work in IBrowse.

DB: Obviously, it is a question without an easy answer. Whenever I have the opportunity, I favour using IB. However, at work, or on my laptop, I have to go with Firefox. I can't stand using IE, since it has none of the usability features I require.

What would you consider to be the strengths of IBrowse?

DF: Configurability - but I'm biased as I'm a prefs freak :)

DB: I'd go with Dave there, too. But not only can the user modify IB to about any liking (apart from skinning), but the standard settings have been much discussed (you wouldn't believe how much discussion lies behind every UI decision) so that it will suit as many users as possible.

What would be your main reason to encourage someone to register IBrowse instead of using AWeb (free), or using a browser on another platform?

DF: I haven't got one. Unfortunately (or fortunately, depending on your point of view), I am not one of those people that thinks Amiga (or indeed IBrowse) is the best thing in the world. In fact, I find that view extremely narrow minded. My answer is simple, and is one I use a lot - use which ever tool you need to use, to do the job. If that's AWeb, use AWeb. If that's IE6, use IE6. From a personal view, I realise that IBrowse is lacking in many areas, which is why I also have several PCs that I can use. However, I "enjoy" using IBrowse, hence why I use it and help develop it.

DB: Very good answer, Dave :)

What would you say is lacking in the current version of IBrowse? How would it affect a user during normal browsing?

DF: Assuming current to be the forthcoming 2.4; iframe support



Dave Fisher taking a break from his IBrowse responsibilities.

and CSS. Those are the two biggest areas we lack IMO. Lack of iframe means some pages which use an embedded frame will simply render as a blank page or space where the embedded contents should be. Lack of CSS can mean two things really - the page layout being completely broken, or the colours/styles missing (which can result in black text on a black background for example).

Many people also include JavaScript as an area Amiga browsers lack, but the implementation in IB2.4 is almost the complete JS1.5 core. However, due to lack of DOM (Document Object Model) and CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) support, a lot of JS can fail. That's not a lack of JS, more a lack of the DOM support.

What do you consider to be the main drawbacks of IBrowse to prevent it from being used as the "main" browser for the Amiga users?

DF: CSS. But then again, that depends a lot on the sites you visit. Most of the sites I go to don't use much or any CSS, so the browsing works fine.

DB: Yep, CSS and the DOM. It has become the nominal requirement for all new web site authoring, so it is vital to get it into IB 3.

What are the limitations of the demo version?

DF: It can only use one window or browser tab, is limited to two connections, only https, http and file protocols are supported (no ftp, mailto or gopher support), and it will timeout after 30 minutes use.

What new features will 2.4 bring to the table?

DF: For those on the web, check out the full list on the IBrowse web site.

For those not on the web:

Summary of the new features:

Plugin API
AmiSSLv3 Support
Context Pointers
Background Tab Loading
Preliminary Character Set & utf-8 Support (OS 4)

Summary of re-written features:

Spoofing Engine
FTP Networking Code

Summary of improved features:

JavaScript Engine
HTML Engine
HTTP Engine
Cookie Support
Localisation
Various GUI Elements
Internal GIF Decoder
Table Parser
Memory Management

The change log stands at around 450 (currently) changes since 2.3 (for comparison, 2.3 had around 630 changes over 2.2).

Will you be able to do the "middle-click = open link in background tab" trick, which is a common feature in browsers on other platforms?

DF: No, but you can right click and choose "view link in new inactive browser" which does the same thing.

There has been talk of an OEM version of IBrowse being bundled with the final release of OS 4, which version will this be, and what will be the differences between it and the demo version or full versions?

DF: It will be 2.4. It won't timeout and will have more features than the demo, but it won't be as complete as the full release.

If the AmiZilla project (an effort to port the open source Mozilla web browser to the Amiga) becomes reality, how do you see IBrowse3 competing with it?

DF: No idea to be honest! IBrowse development will continue regardless, so I guess it depends on which browser people prefer to use.

DB: From my point of view, as long as the HTML rendering and JS support is more or less the same, it boils down to performance and the feel of the browser experience.

What will IBrowse3 have to offer, and when do you think it is likely to be released?

DF: CSS/DOM and iframe support. I have no idea, so will say "When it's done" :)

At what point do you think IBrowse will be fully "up to date" in comparison with the competition across the platforms?

DB: We do not have a road map laid out for such an implicit feature set. However, with each release, IB will be more and more up to date.

DF: Honest answer is probably one you don't want to hear - but never. Not for the lack of wanting, but simply due to the fact there is a small team working on IBrowse compared to the main browsers on the majority of platforms, plus the standards are always evolving.

I have never really followed the "Internet" from its inception (I first got online in 1996 iirc), but the WWW seems to have evolved from a simple way of providing information to the end user, into a fully fledged content delivery system - meaning it scales from PDA size through to intranet size (which in most cases provides stuff way beyond the average website - such as 3D visulation and collaboration tools etc).

In addition to that, you have the problem with 3rd party elements, not necessarily the 3rd party standards the likes of Netscape and Microsoft have, and are introducing, but things like Flash and Real etc. While they remain

Features

IBrowse 2.4 demonstrates its new character set support on OS 4.



proprietary the chances of them being fully supported by the non-mainstream platforms is near zero. In theory we could have a “modern” browser tomorrow via paths such as Mozilla and KHTML, but the end result is Flash, Real, JAVA and other plugins will not be available so we will still be lacking.

Feature-wise, will IBrowse 3 have improved password handling, for instance?

DB: Possibly, it partly depends on which requests we hear of, but also on which annoyances we find during the development. Since we also use the browser ourselves, we will after a while find the need to improve different features, based on our experiences with the browser.

DF: I certainly have a few ideas for password handling which I would like to implement, plus another idea which could be interesting - and no I won't tell!

Do you follow the discussions at the IBrowse mailing list and the various Amiga forums regarding IBrowse?

DB: When I have the time. Dave and Oliver make an excellent job of communication with our users.

Is the feature list of IB3 still open for user input?

DB: Yes, it is only 2.4 that is set in stone. The actual feature scope for 3.0 does include the items mentioned earlier, but other changes may be done too.

When will IBrowse go PPC?

DF: IBrowse 3.0. (I understand there will be a PPC native javascript library in 2.4 –ed)

Will there be both OS 4 and MorphOS versions? And will you still support the Classic Amiga version?

DF: There will be an OS 4 PPC version, and a 68k version which will run under MorphOS, classics under OS 3.x, and Amithlon etc. Whether we do a native MorphOS version has not yet been decided – once the OS 4 version is complete, we will evaluate the situation. However, OS 4 is the platform we will be concentrating on, so certain features may be absent under OS 3.x and MOS, such as the character set support.

Can you say anything today about upgrade offers from 2.3 to 2.4, or even 3.0?

DF: 2.4 will be free to 2.3 users, as always. Upgrades to 2.4 from other releases will be the same as they were when 2.3 was released. No idea about 3.0 at this stage.

Why have you chosen to commit to IBrowse instead of contributing to either of the open source browsers being worked on for the Amiga today (AWeb/Mozilla)?

DF: Simple - I'm not that good at programming :) That said, I also love MUI both to program and to use, and I can't stand Mozilla/Firefox (they're just not for me), so I don't have any real interest in working on either of the other offerings. I do however admire the work done by both the other teams, from being involved in the IBrowse development it's certainly opened my eyes to how much work goes into these things.

DB: Because you can make a browser that differs.

Development on IBrowse3 has been going on alongside, and independently of, IBrowse 2.4, how come?

DF: Quite simply, the IBrowse source branched just before 2.3 was released, when Stefan began work on 3.0. At the release of 2.3 we made the decision to make a 2.4, which would contain the Plugin API that we postponed from 2.3, and to fix the bugs we missed that were reported following 2.3's release. Oliver and I continued to work on 2.4, whilst Stefan and David worked on 3.0.

Does that mean that IB3 is almost written from scratch?

DF: No, large chunks are, and more chunks will be, but it still has its roots in 2.x (in the same way 2.x was based on 1.x).

I've read a rumour that IBrowse “invented” tabbed browsing, is this true?

DB: I have also heard that rumour. Without making such claims, I'd say IBrowse had tabs very early compared to other popular browsers.

DF: I was under the impression that was the case, but someone told me recently that some unknown browser on Windows had it before IB. I have no idea what the real answer is.

Dave F, you are also involved with OS 4, what are your responsibilities there?

DF: Only as a beta tester – I don't do any development work for the OS 4 project itself.

David B, are you also involved with OS 4 in any way?

DB: I have no responsibilities, per se. But I try, whenever I find the opportunity, to contribute with help. To and fro, I assist Stefan with whatever he is doing with OS 4 at the moment.

Are you involved with any other projects, Amiga-wise?

DF: No, haven't got enough time for anything else!

DB: Not at the moment, no.

Why do you stick with the Amiga after all these years of, more or less, “hibernation”?

DF: With the exception of all these stupid pointless battles that seem to be constantly going on, because it's fun. I use computers all day, every day, PC's running XP & FreeBSD, and SGI Octanes running IRIX, so I have a broad range of hardware and OSes to use, not to mention the fact I've been using them since the BBC model B at school. But the only platform I get any pleasure from using is Amiga OS.

DB: Because it is still a computer which packs a punch. Even my A4000 often feels faster than my 3.2GHz 2GB DELL at work.

Is the Amiga your main computer?

DF: Yes, just. As I said earlier, I use my laptop a lot, so that skews the results somewhat as I have no choice there!

DB: When I can. There's no point in pretending that it can be used for everything, at the moment.

What do you primarily use your Amigas for?

DF: E-mail, chatting on IRC, browsing, and development.

DB: Development and surfing.

What, in your opinion, is missing from OS 4 in order to make it ready for the uninitiated masses?

DF: Ah good, a question that has no answer. Thanks!

The first question is who are the “uninitiated masses” ? If they are Classic owners, then there is nothing missing from OS 4 which isn't missing from OS 3 as far as the software I personally use or used, goes.

If they are ex-Amiga users, then that very much depends on what

they want out of it - chances are they have a PC with Office, Firefox, Photoshop and the latest games, so again there is nothing “lacking” in OS 4 which they don't have already.

If they are new to the Amiga or computers in general, then it will be a modern browser, and an office suite.

However, what is really missing (which is indirectly related to OS 4), is cheap, reliable, readily available hardware. Hopefully this will be addressed in the future, but it's one area that unfortunately affects OS 4 .

What do you find lacking on the software side of the Amiga today in order to make it a mainstream system?

DB: Depends on what you mean by a mainstream system. If the target is to have kids go “Can't we buy an Amiga, my PC is old and crappy”, then we have a long way to go. Other areas are (or will be) competitive, such as audio and video handling.

DF: The only software I personally miss is a video editing suite, but given the hardware



Here's the new flash plug-in in action.

requirements and cost of commodity PC hardware these days, it is going to be a long, long time before I switch from the PC to doing it on the Amiga, even if we had the software for it.

What do you think of the Amiga's chances of survival in the future?

DB: No question there, really. Amiga will survive. We will have to see what form it takes.

DF: With Hyperion behind the wheel of Amiga OS, I think it has a good future regarding the market it is currently in, depending on how the hardware works out.

For gaining market penetration in the desktop world, my personal opinion is nothing will change. Sure I'd like to be proven wrong, but I think realistically speaking, the might of Microsoft, the marketing of Apple, and the



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Features

popularity of Linux/BSD are just too big to gain any ground.

For the embedded market, I have no idea as I don't have any involvement in that area.

Finally, is there anything you'd like to add?

DB: Yes. Stefan, keep up the good work, you have always inspired me!

DF: Yeah, can I get back to IBrowse now ? ;)

Seriously, thanks for asking me for the interview, God knows why, I'm not exactly interesting :)

On behalf of the IBrowse Development Team, I'd like to thank the supporters of IBrowse over the years, in particular the last 5 or 6 which have been very slow going all round.

I'd also like to publically thank David and Oliver for their help with some of my tasks in developing IBrowse, they have been very patient and willing to help, which has made the learning experience that much more enjoyable.

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Micro AmigaOne

Audio Update

After having problems recording audio on the Micro A1-C during his Audio Evolution review last issue, Sean Courtney reports on how he solved the problem.

If you're an audio buff who owns or wants to own an AmigaOne, you probably read my review of Audio Evolution in the past issue. While I raved about the quality of the software and the excellent help from programmer Davy Wentzler, I lamented about how it was seemingly impossible to record sound on the µA1.

The problem was that I could monitor sound coming in through the mic port on my µA1, but the sound just would not record. I have a SoundBlaster Audigy 2 card that I bought solely for MIDI, so I tried recording sound through the Audigy. The AHI driver was limited – sound playback was great, but when recording, the sound could not be monitored; you'd record without being able to hear it.

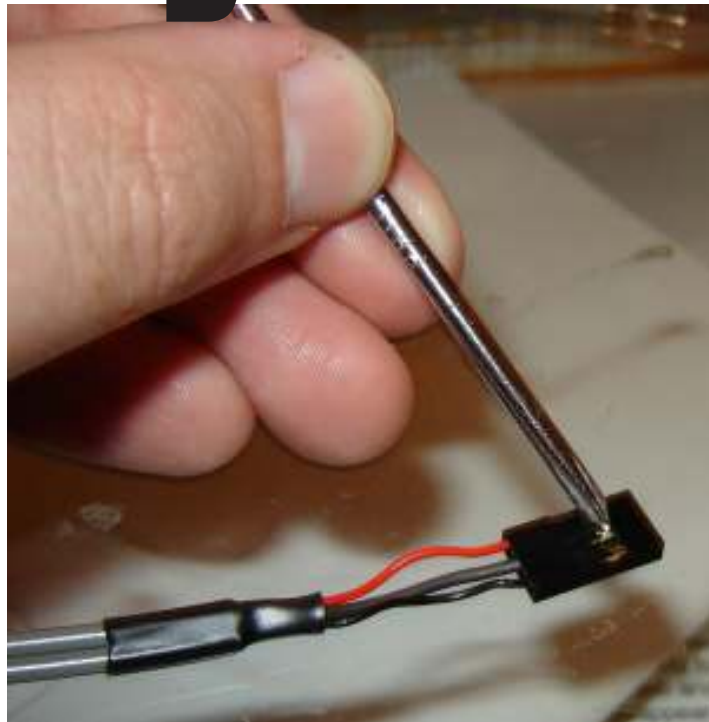
Surely there must be some way to record sound (and concurrently monitor it!) on a \$1400 computer. I entertained the thought that maybe the incoming sound wasn't connected to the onboard header properly. After

WARNING

Please be aware that you undertake any work on your Amiga at your own risk. Neither Total Amiga nor the author of this piece can be responsible for any damage you do to yourself or your Amiga while following these instructions. Also remember that work of this sort could well void any warranty you might have.

downloading and printing out the unofficial µA1-C guide from intuitionbase.com, I popped the cover off and took a close look. Sure enough, some of the wires weren't connected properly, and one wasn't even connected at all. After connecting the wires according to the diagram in the handbook, I noticed improved sound playback, but I still couldn't record.

Feeling totally stumped and defeated, I logged onto AmigaWorld.net and expressed my dismay. One fellow Amigan told me that Davy had just



The audio cable provided by FrontX comes with three wires connected to a single 3 x 1 header connector. While most audio headers are arranged in this configuration, the header on the µA1-C is not. FrontX's online help recommends using a razor blade to lift the plastic latches on the connector if you need to reconfigure the wires, but I found that using a small screwdriver I had on hand worked just as well. The photo is slightly misleading, as this actually requires two hands, but hey, I needed one free to hold the camera!

released a new driver for CMI8738 cards that might help. For what it's worth, I do remember that Davy indicated it was more than likely an AHI problem, so I tried the new driver. Unfortunately, it didn't solve the problem. Could the audio input on my motherboard be dead, especially after having the audio header wired incorrectly? Knock on wood – after nearly setting my motherboard on fire after connecting an IDE cable improperly, all still worked, so maybe the built-in CMI8738 card was okay. Yet another new version of the driver, which took advantage of a 20dB sound boost enabler in the mic input of the CMI8738, didn't help much, although at one point I was actually able to record a very faint sound. (One user repeatedly suggested I just settle with that and normalize the sound, but I don't have that kind of patience!) Undeniably, this was one of the most frustrating

things I ever experienced as an Amigan. Recording on the latest Amiga seemed an impossibility, until I realized something... Several of the replies on AmigaWorld.net to my original post discussed specifically the mic input, and one user went so far as to mention how line input is a much better option. Exactly why I hadn't thought of that myself, I don't know! Line input was just not an option on my computer case. (For the record, I bought the complete system that Software Hut offers rather than buy the motherboard and then hunt for a case and risk connecting everything incorrectly – better leave that to the pros!) Disgusted by my own ignorance, I removed the cover and followed the cables plugged into the line input on the audio header to see where they went. Unbelievably, the two cables plugged into the line input pins joined with several other cables that were connected to a header on the case labeled "MIC." But

there's no "LINE IN" on the case! You'd think there'd be one, but there isn't on the Antec LANBOY that I received as part of my complete µA1 system.

A prior issue of Total Amiga had a small write-up about a computer accessories dealer named FrontX, whose speciality is providing port extension kits to help eliminate having to crawl behind a computer to connect things like USB devices, joysticks, and whatever else have you. I asked fellow users of AmigaWorld.net whether that could be a viable option, and I was urged again just to record with what I have and use the Normalize program on OS4Depot. Well, that's all fine and dandy, but if I want to use, say, Audio Evolution and record a piano backing and immediately overdub a bass or vocal, that's not a viable option.

Malaysia to the Rescue!

I took a look at FrontX's web site and saw that they do indeed supply internal cables that can be used for either dual RCA line in or line out. There was one little problem though – the header connector on the cables has three wires arranged differently from how the header on the motherboard is arranged. No problem – FrontX also sells stand-alone header connectors for any other configuration you might need, so I ordered some single-pin connectors. The help section on the web site also led me to order some female terminals and to go to the hardware store and buy a pair of narrow-tip pliers so I could crimp the header terminals.

The cost of a set of ten terminals (I only needed three, but they're sold in strips of ten), the line-in/out RCA connectors, the single-wire header connectors,

This extreme close-up (right) of the audio header shows you just what a delicate operation this is – I don't recommend it for the faint of heart. The set of pins near the top of the photo is the serial port header. Note how every wire connected to the audio header is connected individually, making the audio header probably the most difficult part of the computer to work with.



My new audio inputs are in place. Most audio components arrange the left and right inputs vertically. I figured a smarter thing to do was to have the left input on the left, and the right input on the right! The casing from FrontX allowed me to arrange the ports as I wished.

and the plastic casing required to hold the ports was just a skosh over \$19, which for what I wanted to do was much cheaper than I expected. The pliers cost me \$18. So my little project was going to cost a grand total of just under \$37, assuming I didn't wreck my motherboard!

After several weeks passed (I'd forgotten that FrontX is based in Malaysia!) I finally got the package with all the parts I ordered. An enclosed diagram

mnemonic, as both "ground" and "gray" start with the same letters.

I removed the pins on the line cable from the header connector and found that I hadn't needed to order the terminals; I forgot that to get those wires connected to the terminals in the first place they had to be crimped at the factory! So that was a bit over a dollar spent that I didn't need to spend, plus the price of the pliers. (That's okay – I'm sure I'll find a use for those pliers

"So my little project was going to cost a grand total of just under 37 dollars, assuming I didn't wreck my motherboard!"

told me which wire was which; interestingly, the diagram showed two black wires – one for left audio and one for ground! "Okay, I'll have to be VERY careful to keep these wires in order," I thought to myself; luckily, the diagram was not quite right – the ground wire was actually gray. That was an easy

another time!) Attaching the single-wire terminal connectors was a snap, literally and figuratively.

Next I attached the RCA ports to the casing, which was a simple matter of sliding some pieces out and sliding other pieces back in. I then attached the casing to the front of the computer case, which isn't quite as easy as it looks, it requires a steady hand to get the casing to attach evenly.

Then came the part of the project I was really not looking forward to: connecting the cables to the motherboard. The audio header on the µA1 is located in the rear of the motherboard and surrounded by external connectors and the serial header connector (and, in my case, right under the power supply) with not much room to work. I had to remove the power supply to



access the audio header. Needle-nose pliers were necessary to get the line cables connected, and even with said pliers it was not a fun task. I very happily removed the MIC connectors (and did not reconnect them!), so that made things a bit easier to work with. After a lot of near misses, I had the cables connected. I pressed the connectors into the motherboard just to make sure they made contact. I put the cover back on and knew that my computer would either explode, not boot, or boot nicely.

Does it Work?

The computer booted with no problems. Sound playback worked. For the real test, I connected my keyboard to my newly-added line-in ports, ran AHISound, and banged out a few chords. Hmm... the VU meter in AHISound was registering the sound nicely, but did it record? I opened MakeCD, loaded in the file I just recorded, and hit "Play" – and I heard, loud and clear, the random chords I played on my keyboard! I repeated the process with Audio Evolution... success!

With the help of the users of AmigaWorld.net and a write-up published a few years ago in Total Amiga, I was able to get my µA1 to do the one thing that I had struggled with for months. Hopefully my experience will be useful to anybody with a µA1 and a case that doesn't have a built-in line port. As for me, I can finally resume a project I abandoned this winter when I got the µA1 – transferring some rare vinyl to CD. If my estimations are correct, I'll have this project done in time for when the Chicago Cubs win the World Series (explanations from our American readers are welcome! –ed).

Parts List

Parts from <http://www.frontx.com> needed to do the job (all prices in USD):

Casing	\$9.90
RCA Audio L/R Internal	\$6.90
Header Connector 1x1 (three purchased)	\$0.45
Grand total	\$17.25



Adding the RCA ports to the front casing was a simple matter of removing a couple of blanking panels and sliding the ports into place. To help prevent wobbling the ports too much when adding or removing an audio source, I ended up putting the two RCA ports on the bottom portion of the casing with the blanking panels above.

.info

Developer

Stefan Fellner
<http://amigos.amiga.hu/dvplayer/>

Price

Shareware\$28.00
 (£17 approx.)
 Demo version available, on-line registration via Reg.net.

Requirements

Amiga OS 4.

Recommended

800MHz or faster processor for DVD and other higher resolution movies.
 48MB RAM.

Test System

AmigaOne XE G4 800MHz.
 512MB RAM.
 NEC DVD-ROM.
 Amiga OS 4 developer version.

Several movies playing smoothly on the Workbench screen.



DVPlayer

Classic Amigas never really had the CPU power and I/O bandwidth to play high resolution video smoothly. Mick Sutton finds out how the latest shareware video player harnesses the raw power of his AmigaOne.

Over the years there have been many media players for the Amiga, but I would say that none of them have met the main requirement of most Amiga users: the ability to play anything we throw at them! Well, DVPlayer can't, as yet, play all media files you throw at it, but it comes pretty close and is a very polished professional piece of software to boot!

Where and how much?

DVPlayer has been in development for some time now and has been available to OS 4 beta testers to try out and report bugs. The program is shareware and I certainly hope the author, Stephen Fellner, gets lots of orders to reward all his efforts. The price is 28 US Dollars (£17) which seems reasonable.

There is a demo available to try at the DVPlayer's web site which is time restricted and has full screen mode disabled, but it will give you a very good idea of the program's capabilities. Once you

"All that is missing is the popcorn!"

decide that DVPlayer is something you want, you can order it on the website mentioned above (using PayPal) and you will get the program sent to you via e-mail. I understand this isn't an automated service so orders are processed by Stephen manually. In my case it was only about an hour or so before the program arrived, now that's what I call service!

What can it play?

Okay then, down to the nitty gritty, what files can DVPlayer actually play? The professional

documentation (in PDF format) that comes with the program lists the following formats: MPEG 1/2 video streams, MPEG 1/2 system streams, Video CD, SVCD, VOB files (found on

DVDs) and AVI files. Many of the audio and video codecs which are used within AVI files are supported including DivX, XVID, MJPG, Cinepak, Indeo Video, PCM, MP2, MP3 plus others.

Unfortunately at this time DVPlayer does not play Windows Media (.WMV) or Quicktime (.MOV) files; although the documentation states that other formats will be hopefully supported in a future release.

Also the author hopes to implement direct DVD playing (rather than loading VOB files via CDFS), better overlay support, I/O plug-in support, a plug-in for IBrowse 2.4 and improvements in user interface (which seems fine now to me) so it looks very much like development is continuing apace.

Is it any good?

Once DVPlayer has been loaded I think most people will be pleasantly surprised with the look of the program. Its GUI is skinnable and two skins are included, the default (which I think is really cool) has a brushed metal background and the other option is in the style of OS 1.3 which I must admit I don't like but may appeal to some people. Load up a movie by selecting the file in a standard file requester and by default DVPlayer starts playing it right away (no need to hit the play button). I noticed that it ran very smoothly, without any visible frame skipping or any video to audio timing errors which have plagued some other players.

Unencrypted DVDs play well and in their correct aspect ratio.

The GUI features controls for play/pause, stop, previous chapter, fast reverse, fast forward, next chapter, volume, loop play and load movie. There is also a slider that indicates where you are in the movie which can be moved manually to find an area of movie that you may want to get to. Within the GUI there are also nice "play" and "loop play" LEDs that "light up" (a green glow) to show the user what's happening. There is also an up and down style button next to the displayed file being played, this selects previous or next movie from list if you have selected multiple files in the load requester or appended files to the play list.

Besides the controls available from within the GUI there are also keyboard shortcuts such as space bar for play/pause, return or enter to toggle between



window and full screen, arrow up for previous file, arrow down for next file, arrow left for seek backwards, arrow right is seek forwards, numeric keypad - is zoom out half size, numeric keypad + is zoom to normal size (these last two are in window mode only). If that wasn't enough control for you, menus are available via the right mouse button for such things as open movie, append (add a file or files

to the play list), open video CD, append video CD, about and quit and some of the playback controls are also selectable from within the menus.

Playing back movies, as I mentioned earlier, is very smooth and is particularly nice in full screen mode which is best for watching full length movies. Both in full screen and window modes, DVPlayer does not suffer from the incorrect scaling problems that I have seen on other players. For example wide screen movies are shown in the correct wide aspect ratio. All that is missing is the popcorn!

To play a DVD in a DVD-ROM or RW drive connected to your AmigaOne, you need to select the VOB file containing the movie from a file requester. DVPlayer doesn't yet support DVD menus. Unfortunately DVPlayer at this time cannot play encrypted DVD's which is a problem for some people, but it played all the movies that were not encrypted just fine. The

machine I tested DVPlayer on was an un-fixed AmigaOne XE and I noted that, although the DVD-ROM in the machine was running via the on-board IDE interface (non-DMA), it ran the movies quite smoothly with perfect in-sync sound. On that note, the DVPlayer author had some legal issues regarding DVD audio AC4 playback with the initial released avcodec.library (used by DVPlayer to decode audio and video) but this has now been resolved with a new avcodec.library and a52.library.

Conclusion

So to conclude, DVPlayer is a fine player indeed, well polished and quite well featured. It lacks the ability to play WMV and Quicktime movies at present but I think this may be rectified in the near future. Lots of time and effort has gone into creating this fine player and I feel the cost to the end user is well worth it, recommended.



I was pleased to find that movies from my digital camera played.

Results**Pros**

- + Polished GUI.
- + Smooth playback.
- + Good AVI codec support.

Cons

- No support for WMV or MOV movies.
- No DVD menus or encrypted DVDs.

Pretty Good!

Amiga Forever Premium Edition

Robert Williams finds out what goodies Cloanto have in store for us on the CD and two DVDs that make up Amiga Forever 2005 - Premium Edition.

Amiga Forever is Cloanto's well known Amiga emulation package, its main aim is to allow Windows users to emulate an Amiga quickly, easily and legally. To fulfill this goal, the package contains the Amiga emulators WinUAE and Fellow, licensed Amiga ROMs and operating system, and a pre-installed Amiga environment so there is no complex setup to do. The package is tied together with an

installer and a neat launcher program. Amiga Forever also includes emulators for other platforms including Linux, Mac and even Amiga OS (to emulate an older Amiga on a newer one) but these don't have the automated installation or launcher interface offered in the Windows version. In this review I'll be concentrating on AF2005 as a package for Windows users and also seeing what it offers for existing Amiga users.

In recent releases, Cloanto have added some historical Amiga material to the Amiga Forever package so you are no longer buying a CD with an emulator and some ROMs but a complete nostalgic package to bring back the Amiga's glory days of the late eighties and early nineties. This trend has been taken much further with the 2005 Premium Edition. This package is supplied in a DVD case with a professionally printed insert that wouldn't look out of place in any software shop. Inside are two DVDs and a CD, all professionally pressed and screen printed in full colour. As a



bonus you'll also find a self adhesive case badge with the classic Amiga boing ball logo, a really nice touch. The CD contains the emulation package and Windows installer while the DVDs are used for video content. Rather than being encoded in a Windows Media format as in AF version 6, these are standard unencrypted, dual layer, DVDs which can be played in any DVD player or on a computer capable of DVD playback.

Editions

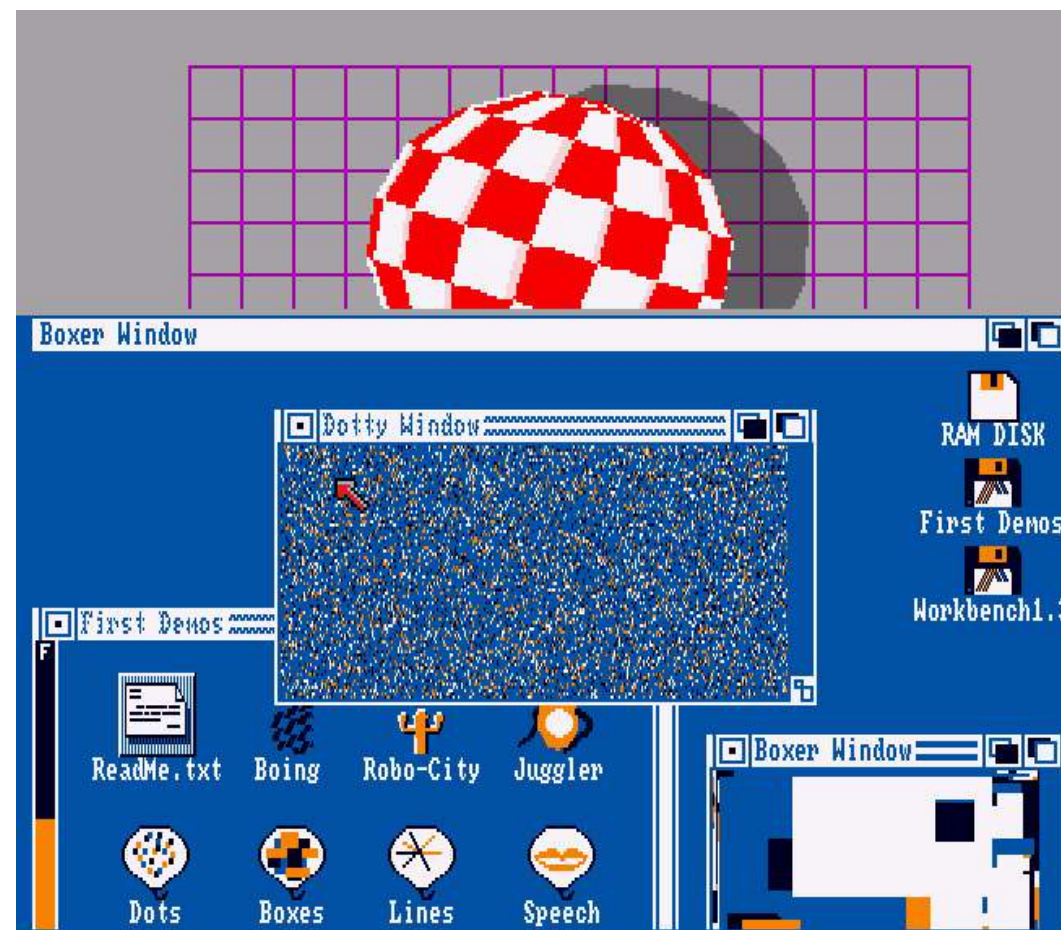
In addition to the Premium Edition I'm reviewing here, you can also buy or upgrade to other Amiga Forever 2005 editions. The Download edition has all the files

you need to get a legal Amiga emulation up and running including the launcher utility and preinstalled versions of OS 1.3 and 3.x. The Plus edition still has to be downloaded, but this time you receive an ISO image which you can burn onto a CD. This adds the CDBoot capability, Amiga Explorer and some historical materials (such as magazine articles, patents and photos but not videos) to the download edition.

As I reviewed Amiga Forever 6 only a few issues ago (issues 18 and 19 to be exact), this review will concentrate on the new features in AF2005. If you want a more in-depth look at the features of the emulation please read the review in issue 18 where that is covered in detail.

Emulation

The Amiga Forever 2005 CD autoplays on Windows and pops up an attractive launcher window featuring the familiar cracked earth background from the packaging. The launcher offers the option of installing the package onto your hard disk but you can also run everything from the CD without installing. When run from CD, the only limitation is that you won't be able to save files to disk during the emulation. The launcher has several tabs, each of which lets you access the content of a different part of the package.



The default Workbench 1.3 installation provided with Amiga Forever 2005 gives you some of the demos originally used to prove the Amiga's graphical prowess and multitasking capabilities.

On the "General" tab you can start the Amiga emulation in either Amiga OS 1.3 or 3.x. Both of these options boot into Workbench enabling you to run your Workbench based programs or take a look at the goodies Cloanto have preinstalled. Once you have booted into Workbench 1.3, two virtual disks are available, one is the standard 1.3 Workbench disk and the other is called "First Demos". This contains a number of the famous demos which helped publicise the Amiga in its early days such as the "Boing" ball, Juggler, Robo-City animation and a demo of speech synthesis.

The OS 3.x Workbench is a rather more custom Workbench setup with Glow Icons, and a Tool Manager tool bar along the bottom for easy access to some of the preinstalled applications and utilities. The emulation uses Picasso 96 and a special UAE driver to take advantage of the PC's graphics card and display higher resolutions (800x600, 8 bit by default). You can use the screen mode preferences program to change the resolution and colour depth if you wish. Networking is

preconfigured to use your Windows network connection, so you can use Internet applications such as the included AWeb browser straight away. Some useful utilities and programs including Turbo Text (a text editor), Personal Paint and Directory Opus 5.5 (unfortunately this version doesn't support glow icons) are preinstalled for you to use and it is easy to install other programs either from CD-ROM or downloaded from the Internet.

As far as I can tell, the preinstalled Amiga OS is unchanged from Amiga Forever 6 and while it works well it is looking a little long in the tooth. Most Classic Amiga users are probably used to a system with a few more bells and whistles installed than this. I'm also surprised that this configuration is limited to 8MB of fast RAM by default (of which about 3.6MB is already in use) as you soon run out even when running a couple of the included programs (try browsing a graphics-heavy web site in AWeb for example). Of course you can amend the configuration to include more RAM and install more programs but for newcomers to Amiga

emulation a more fully featured default would be nice.

The main improvement to the emulation side of Amiga Forever comes from the adoption of the recently released WinUAE version 1.0. Aside from general bug fixes and improvements, this version comes with a greatly enhanced GUI that is much easier to understand and use. Rather than go through all WinUAE's features again here, take a look at my review in issue 20 for the low down.



The launcher utility puts every part of the package quickly to hand. The "Games" and "Demos" pages let you launch the included software at the click of the mouse.

Games and Demos

The Amiga Forever 6 CD came with a few games in ADF (disk files for use with emulators) format as a taster of what can be legally downloaded from sites like Back2Roots. This feature has been extended and improved in AF2005. Now the launcher has "Games" and "Demos" tabs; each of which provide a list of titles and clicking on one causes the emulation to launch with appropriate settings and load that title. The games include Football Glory, Mindwalker (one of the first Amiga games, actually published by Commodore), Ports of Call and Obsession Pinball. On the demos front we have the classic State of the Art from Scoopex along with titles from Kefrens, Sanity and Silents. A link is provided to the Amiga Forever web site which explains where further games and demos can be found to download legally.

CD Boot

The AF2005 CD has another feature that may not be immediately obvious; if you set your PC to boot from CD and then reset with the disc loaded the system will boot from the CD and into Amiga OS. No operating system needs to be installed on the PC for this to work! Cloanto have achieved this feat by installing a customised version of Knoppix Linux on the CD along with the Linux version of UAE. The emulation automatically configures graphics, sound and networking so you can use Amiga programs and even browse the Internet (if you have an Ethernet connection and DHCP) straight away.

.info

Developer

Cloanto
<http://www.amigaforever.com>

Available From

AmigaKit
<http://www.amigakit.com>

Price

Premium edition\$59.95
Plus edition (235MB d/l)\$39.95
Download edition (30MB d/l)\$29.95
Premium edition upgrade\$39.95
Other edition upgrades are available.

Requirements

Windows 98+ (not Win. NT).
500MHz processor.
64MB RAM.
30MB hard disk space.
Direct X 8.0.
DVD player or DVD playback facility.

Test System

Athlon XP 2500+
512MB RAM
Windows XP SP2



The updated Amiga Forever branding and logo is carried across all areas of the package giving a very professional feel.

Reviews

Unfortunately, as I reported in the AF6 review, the CDBoot configuration is very limited as there is no writable disk on which to install new software. The emulation has been configured to allow only 2MB of chip RAM and 8MB of fast RAM which limits the amount of software you can run and means there's not even enough free space to install any significant new software to RAM. The CD boot option is impressive and might be a good way to demo Amiga OS to people when there's not a real Amiga about but unless you want to use one of the few preinstalled programs it's still not very useful.

Historical Content

Thus far, Amiga Forever 2005 hasn't seemed like much of an upgrade over version 6, however as soon as you slip one of the included DVDs into your player you can see where the time and effort has gone. Each DVD presents a professionally produced menu system (available in English or Italian) that can be used to access the individual videos and other content. Each video is split into a number of scenes which can be accessed from thumbnail index pages or using the DVD player's controls. Subtitles are available in English and Italian if you need them. Here's a summary of what you'll find on the discs, items new in Amiga Forever 2005 are marked with a star (*). Remember that the videos that were included with AF6 were supplied in Windows media format, now you have them in full DVD quality and they can be played almost anywhere.

Disc 1

Launch of Amiga – A promotional video from Commodore's launch event in 1985, this includes the famous moment when artist Andy Warhol used an Amiga to paint Debbie Harry. It is fascinating to see the Amiga being given the full showbiz treatment.

Inside Commodore* – This is a film made to give developers at the '88 developer's conference. It's a light-hearted insight into Commodore, concentrating on the developer support staff in CATS (Commodore Amiga Technical Support).



A grab from the index page of the "History of Amiga" video on DVD 1. As you can see from this example, the menus are very slick and wouldn't look out of place on a movie disc.

Jay Miner Speech – Jay, often known as the father of the Amiga, talks at a 1990 user group meeting about the Amiga's early development.

Jay Miner Interview – This is an audio only interview with Jay covering more about the Amiga's development and his feelings on computing as a whole. While the audio plays, a photo of Jay and a scrolling transcript of the interview is displayed.

History of the Amiga* – A 1992 production that tells the history of the Amiga's development including interviews with RJ Mical, Jay Miner and Dale Luck. Also included is a round table discussion with more of the original Amiga team and loads of their personal photos from the time of the Amiga's birth. For me this was the real star of the new material, seeing the people behind the Amiga reliving those early years was most inspiring.

Disc 2

The Deathbed Vigil – Dave Haynie's famous video record of his last day at Commodore and the Deathbed Vigil party held for ex-employees. Another insight into Commodore and interesting to compare with "Inside Commodore" on disc 1.

Dave Haynie Interview* – This mid 90's interview with Dave (who was instrumental in the design of many big-box Amigas) runs for nearly an hour. It mainly covers his work on the Amiga at Commodore and is full of interesting and funny anecdotes.

Amiga Faces* – This feature is a collection of photos taken by Cloanto at various Amiga events over the last few years, there's hours of fun to be had in trying to spot if your face has been preserved for posterity!

Overall there are well over five hours of video spread over the two DVDs. Most of it has been transferred from NTSC video tape but the quality is very watchable with only a few really noticeable flaws. I didn't realise that any of the new videos actually existed until I saw these DVDs so it was a really nice surprise when I loaded them up.

Amiga Explorer

Rounding off the Amiga Forever package is the very useful Amiga Explorer, this enables you to browse the drives mounted on an Amiga from a Windows Explorer interface. AE can connect the Amiga either via TCP/IP or a serial cable. The serial method has a very neat option that requires no software on the Amiga side provided you have booted from a Workbench disk... very clever! AE appears as a drive icon in Explorer with the Amiga drives as special

folders inside it. The program knows about Amiga file protection bits so you can properly manage your Amiga files and copy files to and from the PC. In TCP/IP mode, AE can also be used to view the drives of the emulated Amiga provided networking is enabled. As far as I can tell, AE doesn't have any substantial new features for the AF2005 release but it's a very handy utility.

Conclusion

Amiga Forever 2005 provides an easy way to get into Amiga emulation in a very attractive package. I would go so far as to say it is the best produced piece of Amiga-related software I have seen in years. The upgrade to WinUAE 1.0 with its improved GUI and the easy to run games and demos do improve the emulation part of the package to some degree but the emulation setup could really do with a make over to make it look more modern and to make the default settings more suitable for running serious Amiga software. If you only use Amiga Forever as an emulator and are not interested in the historical content then I would struggle to recommend the upgrade to you. On the other hand, if you enjoy finding out more about the history of the Amiga then you will love the new content on the two DVDs of the Premium Edition. The DVDs have been produced to the highest standard and the videos now encompass every period of the Amiga until the demise of Commodore. Furthermore, the Amiga Faces section lets you relive some more recent shows and events.

In summary, if you don't have an earlier edition and want to get into Amiga emulation quickly and easily then Amiga Forever 2005 is highly recommended. If you'll enjoy the DVDs don't hesitate to pick up the Premium Edition.

Results

Pros

+ Excellent quality.

+ Fascinating and unique videos.

+ Easy setup.

Cons

- Few changes to basic emulation.

- BootCD very limited.

Pretty Good!

SOFTWARE

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AmiDisk

Looking for a file manager to complement Workbench on OS 4? Robert Williams thinks he has found the tool for you!

For version 4, many parts of Amiga OS are being re-written, updated or at the very least given a bit of visual make-over. However Workbench, the Amiga's graphical "face" and key file management tool, remains largely unchanged even though it has benefited from improvements to other parts of the OS like the new themeable windows and antialiased fonts. From a usability point of view, the main enhancement is provided by the ContextMenus commodity but even this is limited in the features it can add. While a completely re-written Workbench is planned for OS 4.1, a good file manager to use in the mean time will be useful to most OS 4 users. Many classic Amiga file managers run well under OS 4's 68K emulation (although sadly not Directory Opus Magellan) and there are native ports of Directory Opus 4 and DiskMaster. If you're looking for a program that has been designed from the ground up for OS 4 and therefore has a ReAction user interface then AmiDisk is currently the only game in town.

.info

Developer
Roland Florac

Download from
<http://www.os4depot.net/amidisk.lha> in util/filetool

License
Freeware

Requirements
Amiga OS 4

Installation

AmiDisk doesn't have an installer so all you need to do is decrunch the archive and copy the drawer inside onto your hard disk. The drawer contains the AmiDisk program with a "KDE" style icon, AmigaGuide documentation in French and an English readme which contains all the information you'll need if you've used any type of file manager before.

Usage

Running the program for the first time displays a very large splash screen for a few seconds. If this annoys you then fortunately it can be turned off by setting the tooltype "LOGO=0" in the AmiDisk icon. The main window then opens on its own screen; if you prefer it to open on Workbench or another custom screen then this can easily be configured in preferences.

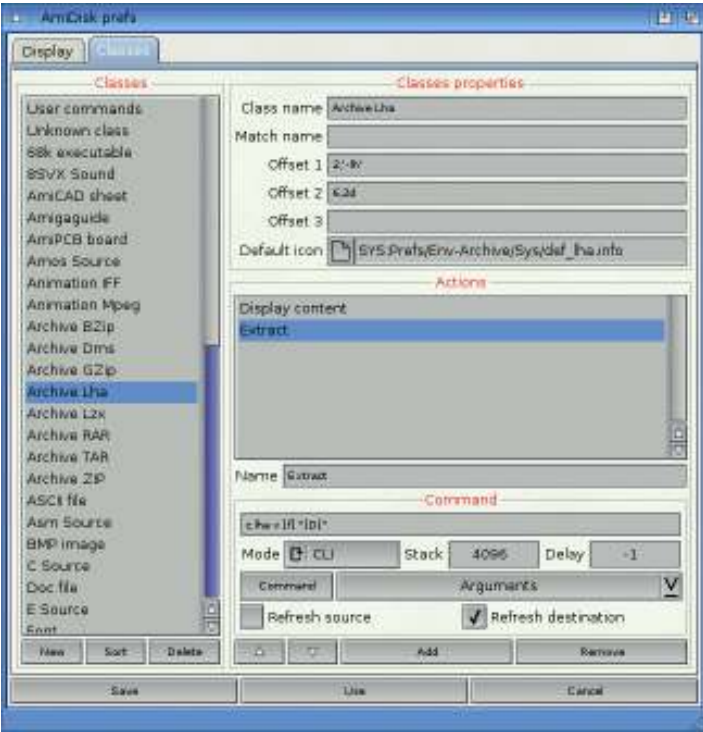
The main window has the classic file manager design with two file list views marked source and destination. Between the two lists are a selection of action buttons which effect the source list or the selected object (file or drawer) within it. While you are limited to viewing two directories at a time, along the top of each list view are five tabs each of which can show a different directory. There is also a history button which shows a list of recently viewed paths for easy selection. These features make it quick to jump between different directories in AmiDisk. Clicking in a list causes it to become the "source" directory and therefore the other list becomes the destination. It seems that the author had some problems making this work due to a bug in the ReAction list class as the readme states that you may have to use the middle mouse button. I had no problems using

the left button on an AmigaOne running the latest beta build of OS 4.

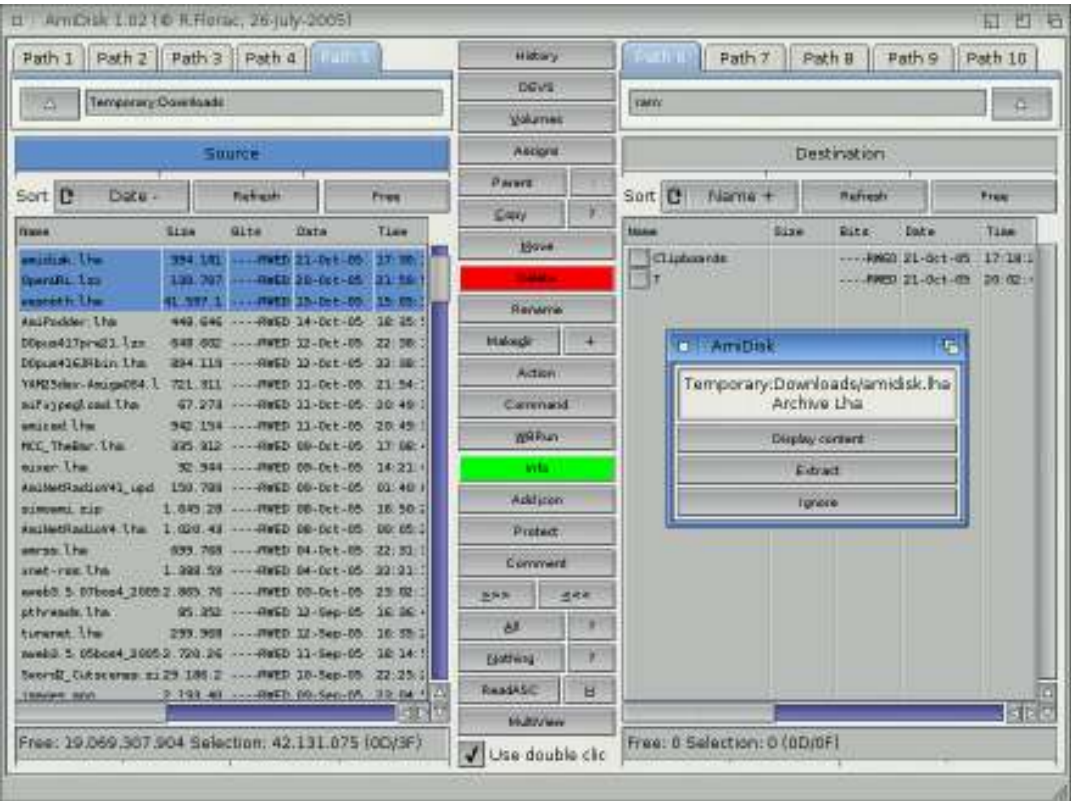
Above each list are a series of gadgets related to it. The full path to the current directory is shown along with a "parent" button (the up pointing arrow). Below that is what looks like a progress bar gadget but it is actually used to show which list is the source and which the destination. I have never noticed these gadgets used as a progress bar and thought they could have been made smaller (or perhaps combined with another row of gadgets) to save some screen space. Next up is a line of gadgets that control the contents of the list, you can select to sort in ascending or descending order by date, size or name. Buttons allow you to refresh the list (re-read the contents of the directory from disk) and clear the list (so no directory is selected).

As well as using the "Sort" gadget, you can change the sort order of the columns by clicking on their headings; the width of the columns can be changed by dragging the dividing lines. Another rather hidden feature that will be familiar to Opus users is that you can click the edge of the window next to a list to display the parent directory. Selecting files in the source list follows standard Amiga conventions, click or click and drag selects one or more files. Hold down shift and click to select additional files. This is unlike Directory Opus where clicking on a file does not clear the existing selection. Function buttons enable you to select all or no files in the source list and there is also the option to select or deselect using a wild card pattern (for example #?.lha would select all the LHA archives).

The buttons in the centre of the window are roughly grouped by



Classes preferences is used to specify custom actions for file types.



The AmiDisk window, the smaller window shows the list of Actions associated with the selected archive.

their function, although there is nothing really to indicate the groupings. At the top are buttons to display devices, assigns, volumes or the history in the selected list view. There is yet another parent button (there are five in total) and one marked with a colon ":" which takes you to the root directory of the volume. Next up are copy and move, these work as you would expect, taking the selected files from the source directory and placing them in the destination. Commands like rename, protect (sets the protection bits on a file or drawer) and comment (sets the file comment) open a handy requester where you can apply the settings to all the selected files or step through them one by one. AmiDisk has built-in ASCII text and hexadecimal readers to view the content of files and there is a button to show the selected file in Multiview. The Hex reader is simple but handy, however the ASCII reader has a very strange design where you must click a button to page through the file rather than using a simple scroll bar.

While the function buttons cannot be customised, AmiDisk offers two ways for you to add your own commands. The "Action" button opens a window listing a set of commands you have configured for the type of the selected file. The

"Command" button is similar, but the window contains global commands which are the same no matter what file is selected. AmiDisk comes with a variety of useful commands set up and a good set of file types defined complete with common actions. You'll be pleased to hear that a file type for LHA archives is defined with actions to show the archive contents (in a pop-up shell window) and to extract the archive to the selected destination. Archives can be created by selecting files and calling the "Archiver" command from the "Command" button. It would be nice if better archive handling (enabling you to list an archive within AmiDisk and extract certain files) could be implemented in a future version.

TIP: When creating archives, just enter the file name you want for the archive in the file requester that opens, it is already set to your selected destination directory. A requester will pop-up for each file and drawer you have selected, if you want them all to end up in the same archive simply select the same archive file each time, the new files will not overwrite the existing ones in the archive.

As another option, AmiDisk also implements the "clipboard" method of file management

made popular by Windows Explorer. This is where you can copy or cut a selection of files in one location, move to another drawer and then "paste" them in. It's important to note that the paste occurs in the source directory rather than the destination which can be counter intuitive (although you do tend to use cut/copy and paste while browsing through directories).

When AmiDisk is working on a file operation, the source and destination list views are greyed out; however the program internally multitasks so you can switch to another set of tabs and continue working. While most functions are in progress a gauge is shown below the destination list, this shows the progress of the current file rather than the whole operation.

Preferences

The preferences window has two tabs, one for the display options

- Results**
- Pros**

 - + OS 4 native with ReAction GUI.
 - + Easy to use.
 - + Speedy and multitasking.

Cons

 - Clunky GUI.
 - Basic archive handling.

and the other for file types which is titled "Classes". On the first tab you can set the default path shown in each file list tab, the default size and position of the AmiDisk window (including an option to grab the current values), and the fonts used for most of the user interface (a few things like the tab titles seem to come from the GUI preference settings). The "Classes" tab has a list of file types down the left hand side. Each file type is recognised by a set of properties, these can be based on the file name or its contents. There is also an option to specify the default icon which will be used by the "Add Icon" function. For each file type, you can set the custom actions that will be available when a file of this type is selected. An action can be a built-in AmiDisk command, a shell program, a Workbench program or an ARexx command. Codes representing a number of arguments, such as the selected file name or destination directory, can be inserted into the command line allowing you to integrate custom commands into AmiDisk. A special file type called "User commands" allows you to add commands to the "Command" button using the same user interface.

Conclusion

AmiDisk is fairly basic as far as file managers go, it doesn't have all the powerful features of Directory Opus 4 and 5. Currently the interface seems a bit clunky, it would be nice if the author could implement context menus and maybe allow the user to customise the buttons. On the other hand, it does have all the file management options you would normally want and is much quicker to use than Workbench when you are working with multiple directories or directories containing lots of files. As it is freeware I would highly recommend giving AmiDisk a try and see how it fits into your way of working.

Pretty Good!

.info

Developer

Max Tretene

<http://www.soft3dev.net>

License

Freeware

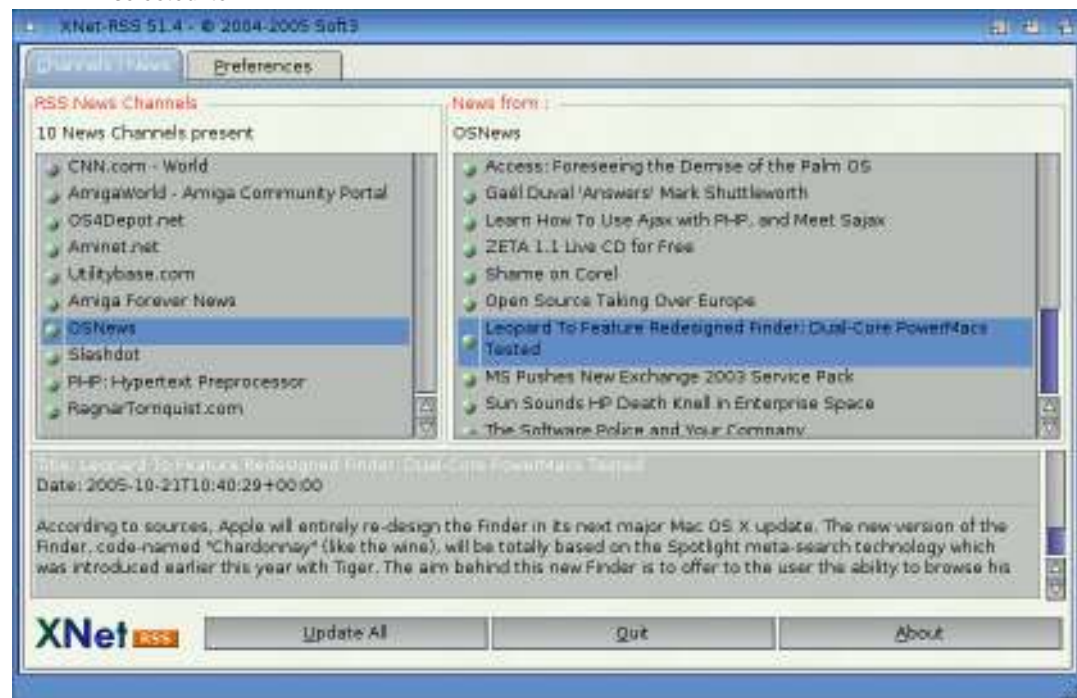
Requirements

Amiga OS 4 Update 3.
Internet connection.

Recommended

OpenURL (OS 4 version)
[http://www.rwo.dk/
OpenURL.lzx](http://www.rwo.dk/OpenURL.lzx)

The main window showing the subscribed feeds ("Channels"), news items in the current channel and the detail of the selected item.



XNet

Need to be up-to-the-minute and on the bleeding edge of news? Then you need an RSS news reader - Robert Williams reviews this OS 4 native offering.

XNet-RSS is only the second RSS news reader for the Amiga to be released (the first was AmRSS reviewed in Total Amiga issue 20) and the first to be OS 4 native, in fact only an OS 4 version is available. In the last few years, dedicated RSS readers have really taken off on other platforms (there are dozens of them on Windows and probably at least twenty on the Mac), so it's good to at least have a choice of programs on the Amiga.

What is he on About?

While you might not be familiar with RSS, you will probably have seen small orange icons marked "XML" or "RSS" appearing on the web sites you visit. These indicate that the information on the page you are visiting is available in the form of an RSS feed. This feed contains the page's information specially formatted (in an eXtensible Markup Language format) so that it can be read by other programs. The original aim of

this format was to allow one web site to display information, in particular news headlines, from another site. The acronym RSS stands for "Really Simple Syndication" and this comes from its original purpose, syndicating information to other sites. As RSS became popular, some clever people realised that they could write software to retrieve RSS feeds and display the news items from many sites at once. This had the advantage that you could check the news on lots of sites without visiting them one by one and the added bonus that as the RSS feeds only usually carried the basic headlines you lost most of the clutter that adorns many web sites. RSS news readers were born and over time the more sophisticated programs have gained features that allow news from various sites to be grouped, so for example you can view the latest headlines over many sites or all the news that mentions a particular topic. Programs with these features are normally called news aggregators.

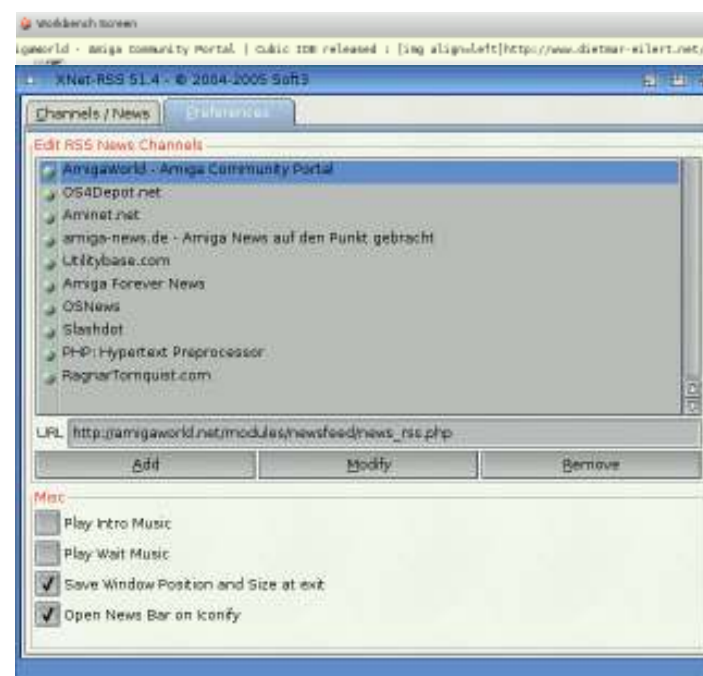
Installation

XNet's installation is about as simple as it could be, you simply decrunch the archive and copy the program drawer onto your hard disk; it doesn't need an installer and no extra libraries are required. The program creates a good impression with attractive icons by Ken "Ken's Icons" Lester Jr. and this is continued with a nice splash screen and a fanfare of music when the program loads. While I'm not normally keen on splash screens, in this case I'm pretty sure this is shown while the program loads your saved feeds.

Usage

The main program window consists of two lists, a text area and some buttons. The list on the left shows all the RSS feeds (referred to as "Channels") which have been added to XNet either through the preferences tab or from a browser link (more on that in the next section). Clicking on a channel shows all the news items present in the RSS feed and selecting an item shows its detail in the text area below. The detail present varies depending on what information is included in the feed; always available are the title and the publication date. Often there is also an overview of the news item. RSS feeds sometimes include HTML formatting and XNet fairly effectively strips this out (I have noticed the odd character entity in the format &char; slip through) to leave the plain text of the news item. If you find a news item that interests you, clicking on the item title will open the full item in your web browser. This feature requires that you have installed and configured the OS 4 version of OpenURL.

XNet saves the news items in each channel to disk when you quit so you don't have to update the feeds each time you use the



The preferences tab and news bar (above).

program. The "Update" button in the main window causes the program to check each feed for new items, a requester with a progress bar is shown as this takes place.

Browser Integration

As RSS links are frequently found on web pages it is handy to integrate your RSS reader with your browser and XNet supports this option. The documentation tells you how to setup IBrowse so it passes RSS links to XNet and this setup could be easily modified to work in other browsers. Once configured, clicking on an RSS link in the browser will open XNet and add a new temporary channel, this is indicated by a blue rather than green dot against the channel name. You can then check out the channel, if you like the content it can be made permanent in the preferences tab. Currently this feature only seems to work if XNet is not running when you click the link, hopefully this will be rectified in a future version.

News Ticker

Viewing the news in the XNet window is all well and good, but the program also offers another option. When it is iconified, XNet can display a ticker tape like "news bar" along the top of the screen. This is a slim area that stretches right across the display and shows a single line of scrolling news. It displays news

and select a directory where the channel data will be saved. If a channel has been added temporarily via your browser, you can use the modify option to make it permanent. Other options allow you to turn the sounds off, save the window size and position on exit and turn off the news bar.

Limitations

As a first release XNet performs well at the basic task of reading news from RSS feeds. However there are a number of areas where it could be developed to become a more powerful and useful tool in the future. Firstly there are no aggregation features and no way to group feeds. In AmRSS and other readers these features enable you to perform actions like viewing the latest articles from all your feeds, or feeds on a particular topic sorted by time and date published. Another useful addition would be a search facility to display all the news items, across feeds, which mention a specific topic. The other important omission, as far as I am concerned, is the lack of automatic updates, I'd like to have XNet running in the background and grab the latest news every few minutes, this would make the news bar much more worthwhile too.

Conclusion

XNet-RSS shows promise in that it has the basics of handling RSS news feeds in place. As it currently has few features to help you analyse the news and find items that interest you it may not seem a great improvement over checking news items manually. That said, it's important to remember that this is the first public release; if the author continues development, I'm sure it will develop into a more comprehensive and very useful program.

Preferences

Preferences are available on a second tab in the main XNet window. The main functions here allow you to add and delete channels from your list. You can manually add a channel by pasting its URL into a requester

Pros

- + OS 4 Native.
- + Attractive interface.
- + Easy to use.

Cons

- Lacks aggregation features.
- No automatic news updates.

Results

Okay 😊

EW...PREVIEW...PRE

On The Edge

<http://www.commodorebook.com>
\$29.99 (£17 approx.)
ISBN 0-9738649-0-7

I was hoping to be able to review this new book on the history of Commodore as a computer company by Brian Bagnall in this issue of TA. Unfortunately my copy arrived too late for me to read it all before our deadline let alone do it justice. Therefore I'm writing this brief preview which will be followed by a full review in issue 23.

Commodore often seems to be neglected in books and documentaries about the development of the micro computer even though they had a number of notable "firsts" in the industry and produced the best selling computer model of all time in the Commodore 64. In "On The Edge" Brian Bagnall aims to set the record straight by dedicating a complete book to the company.

The book begins with a brief history of Jack Tramiel the founder of Commodore as a typewriter repair firm but quickly moves on to the development of the 6502 processor at MOS Technology which was subsequently bought by Commodore. Subsequent chapters cover the PET, VIC 20, Commodore 64 and 128 and the many other technology and business ups and downs of Commodore.

From a quick flick through, the author seems to keep his chapters in chronological order and the first one dedicated to the Amiga starts on page 394 out of 596 pages in total.

I've read the first couple of chapters so far and have found Brian's writing style interesting and engaging. He gives a nice potted history of each person as they are introduced and the narrative is peppered with quotes from the many interviews he carried out for the book.

Preview by Robert Williams

.PREVIEW...PREVIEW

Broken Sword

The Shadow of the Templars

AmigaKit.com have packaged a number of popular adventure games with the ScummVM engine to bring them to the Amiga for the first time. Andy Baldie takes a look at a game from Revolution Software that followed their classic adventure *Beneath a Steel Sky*.

Whenever some new software appears on the Amiga scene, I do my best to support the platform and buy it. And so when I read on AmigaWorld.net that AmigaKit.com had produced an install disc to allow Broken Sword to run out of the box, I thought... go for it! So I paid my £9.98 (that was including the postage), and waited. A couple of days, and three e-mails later (just to keep me fully informed of the status of my order) and the package was with me. It arrived well packaged (bubble wrapped) and consisted of the standard PC game on 2 CDs plus an Amiga installation disk on a mini CD. Keep up the good work AmigaKit.com!

I must confess, I wasn't desperately waiting to try it out,



While low resolution by modern standards, the game features nice hand-drawn style graphics. In interactive scenes, objects in your inventory are shown at the top of the screen and items to mention in conversation are at the bottom.

but found myself with some spare time that night, so... boot up AmigaOne into OS 4-pre3,

"Start". I found the whole installation and start up so very easy. The only thing I can think

"My wife even laughed a few times when she heard the dodgy accents"

put in the mini CD and read the install instructions which were very simple and just as they should be. Okay, so I click on Install icon, select my games directory and wait while everything is transferred from the 2 CDs, (okay so I had to swap the CDs over as well!). Almost done. Loaded AWeb and downloaded the cut-scene animations from the address given, (they are not included due to licensing reasons). Clicked on Install-CutScenes and that was it! This was far too easy, surely?

Right, let's try it out. I went to the directory clicked on the Broken Sword icon and I was confronted by the Scummvm interface. I chose my settings (screen mode etc.) and hit

instructions printed (it's a personal bug-bear of mine), but as they were so simple (have I already said that?), it really doesn't warrant the half page it would take up!

On to the game. It's a simple point-and-click graphical adventure. You play the part of George Stobart, an American ("I'm Canadian, honest") who is caught up in a mystery when a bomb goes off in a French café he is sitting outside. Before long George is travelling all around the world trying to solve the puzzle, but always returning to France to report back to the mysterious reporter who he obviously wants to impress! (Oooh Geeorje!), (That's George in a French accent!).

It's been a long time since I spent any amount of time playing a game, but this one dragged me in from the beginning. It couldn't have been the fancy graphics or special effects, nor the super duper surround sound effects,



The ScummVM interface lets you manage all the compatible games you have installed and set options such as fullscreen.

Cut-scenes help the story flow from one scene to another. They have to be downloaded from the ScummVM web site.

there were none. It's just a really good game. The graphics are well done, and the animation is reasonably smooth. The speech... well... the dialogue had me rolling about the floor so many times! My wife even laughed a few times when she heard the dodgy accents rambling away and she wasn't even playing the game. The interface is easy to use and very intuitive and you soon find yourself trying to do all sorts of strange things with unusual objects in order to solve a simple problem, you'd be surprised what you could use a used

hanky for, or a "thing that measures blood pressure", or some plaster! (And no, I'm not going to tell you!).

I think you'll get the impression that I liked the game, and that is because I did. Was it the best thing since (insert your favourite game or baked product here)? No, probably not. Is it a great game for the price? Most definitely yes! For under a tenner, I defy anyone with even the slightest sense of humour to play it and not find it most enjoyable. Were there any drawbacks? Well, I must confess, I did cheat on two occasions, when I just could

not figure out what the hell I should do. This could be down to me not being used to this sort of game, (I'll let you know once I've played some others) or it could be that some of the actions were just a bit too unusual or items were just a bit

too well hidden! You will have to decide for yourself, because I'm not going to help you.

If you're still reading this and have not bought the game then WHY? Oh and beware the large spittoons!

Results

Pros

- + Classic game.
- + Slick installation.
- + Low price.

Cons

- Low graphics resolution.
- Cut-scenes are a separate download.

Pretty Good!

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Developer

Revolution Software
<http://www.revolution.co.uk>
ScummVM Team
<http://www.scummvm.org>

Distributor

AmigaKit.com
www.amigakit.com

Price

£8.99

Requirements

Amiga OS 4.
CD-ROM.
835MB hard disk space.
Internet connection (to download optional cut-scenes).

.info

Developer

David White and the
Wesnoth Team
www.wesnoth.org

Amiga OS 4 Version

Andrea Palmatè
www.amigasoft.net

Download

www.os4depot.net
wesnoth.lha.in in
game/strategy

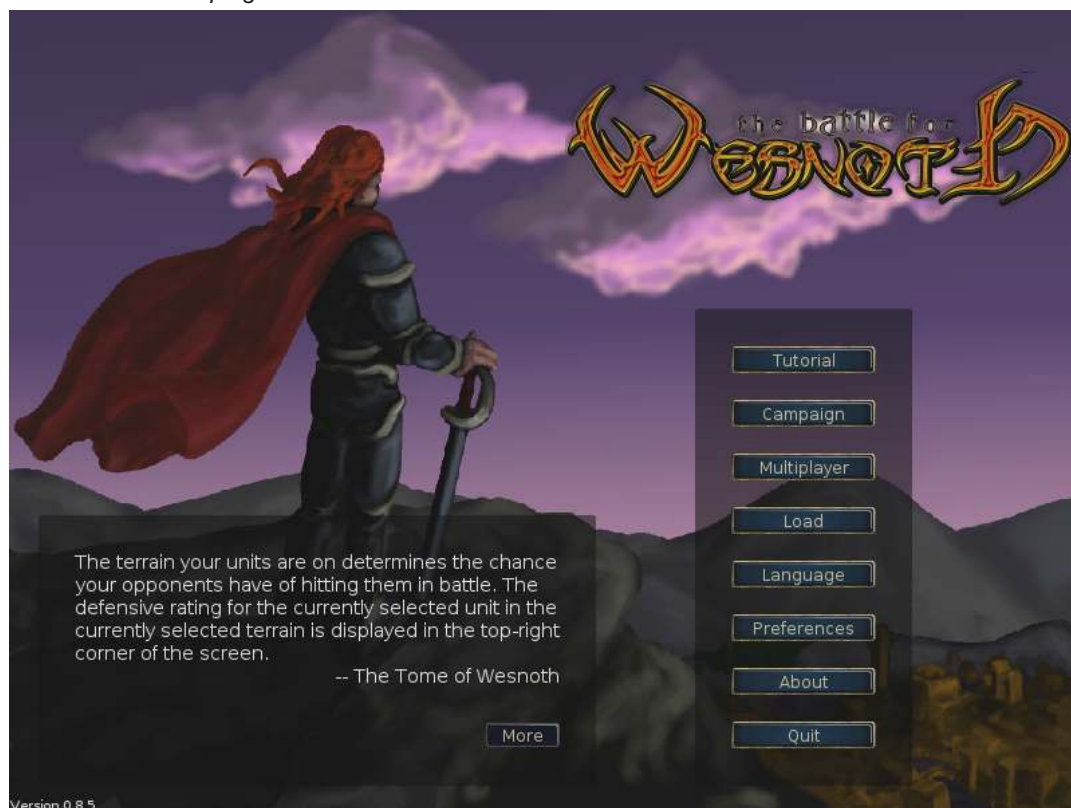
Requirements

Amiga OS 4

Recommended

AmigaOne with G3/G4
processor.

*The main menu showing some
of the game play options.
Notice the tips which
complement the game manual
(on the game's web site) and
tutorial campaign.*



The Battle For Wesnoth

Recently OS 4 and MorphOS developers have been porting a large number of open source games (games developed completely by teams of volunteers rather than ports of older commercial titles). In this review, Tommi Toivanen looks at Andre Palmatè's port of Battle for Wesnoth, a turn based strategy game.

Before I saw the OS 4 port on OS4depot.net, I had never heard about Battle for Wesnoth, so I wasn't expecting much when I downloaded and installed it. What caught my attention with this title, amongst the many other games recently ported to OS4, was the fact that it is a strategy game, a genre not too common on OS 4 yet.

The Battle for Wesnoth is a turn-based strategy game with a fantasy theme. It uses a hex-grid on the playfield, a system used by a lot of other great games in this genre that I've played, such as Heroes of Might and Magic, Battle Isle and History Line 1914-18. This made it easy for me to get directly into the game. As for



*An example of the great
character graphics.*

graphics, they reminded me of the classic Warlords.

When you first start the game or load a campaign, it takes quite a long time for the next screen to appear, don't worry it hasn't crashed, the game is just creating a cache file. The next time you load it will be quicker. When the game has loaded for the first time, you

will probably want to play the tutorial campaign to get the hang of the controls. In the tutorial, an elder-wizard guides you through the game-play via pop-up text boxes.

Once you feel a bit more confident, you can choose the following game types from the game's menu system:

Campaign

A sequence of scenarios that allow you to develop your army by recalling surviving units from previous scenarios. The story-lines to the built in campaigns are good, and the "recall" function is something I have not seen in any other game I've played.

Scenario

A single fight to the death battle where you pit your forces against one or more computer controlled players.

Multiplayer

A scenario played over a network with human and computer players.

Hotseat

A scenario played by several people using one computer. When a player takes their turn at the computer, they're in the hotseat.

The Plot

Fight to regain the throne of Wesnoth, of which you are the legitimate heir, or use your dread power over the Undead to dominate the land of mortals, or lead your glorious Orcish tribe to victory against the humans who dared despoil



your lands. The default installation contains four campaigns, and by using the "get more campaigns" option, you can connect to the 'net and download additional campaigns. You can also create your own.

In most campaigns, you will control units from one faction, but often you will have a recruit list with units mixed in from other factions, and will not have some units from a faction available. Basically, your recruit list is determined by the plot of the campaign, not by a predetermined set of rules.

The Races and Factions

The world of Wesnoth contains several races that have joined forces into different factions. Currently there are six of them: the Rebels, the Knaalgan alliance, the Loyalists, the Northerners, the Undead and the Drakes.

The races contains of: Drake, Dwarf, Elf, Goblin, Human, Lizard, Merman, Naga, Ogre, Orc, Troll, Undead, Wose. There are over 200 different units to choose from, ranging from noble elves to undead ghosts and mighty trolls.

The Game

In every game you start out with a hero, sometimes with more than one. If the hero is killed, the game is lost. To win, you must either complete the goal set in the scenario, or kill the enemy hero(es). When you select a unit to move, the tiles

*Two screenshots showing the style of graphics used.
The shot on the left shows the excellent character graphics while in the one above notice the special effect as a silver mage casts a spell.*

you can move to are highlighted. Upon moving the unit to the desired position, if it ends up next to an enemy unit, you can select to attack.

The attack can either be a short or ranged one, so choose

scenario. This can really make a difference, since the game is very difficult to master even when choosing the easiest difficulty level to play. Do remember to save often, and take advantage of the useful auto-save feature. Since a lot

**"Even seasoned strategy gamers will find
this title sets them a real challenge"**

wisely, the enemy will try to retaliate. Try to recruit as many different types of units as you can afford early on, this allows the units to gain experience, giving them opportunity to advance a level. Many of the units will get a choice of transforming into a more powerful unit, as well as getting additional hitpoints. As an example, when an elvish archer gets to level 2, you get the choice of turning him into either an elvish ranger or an elvish marksman. Additional levels give more hitpoints, and for some units more choices to become a new unit.

A feature I've not seen in any other game, is that when you are playing a campaign, you can recall your best surviving units from the previous

The OS 4 version

The Battle for Wesnoth is one of a growing number of open source games that are designed from the outset to run on a variety of platforms. Andrea has made a good job in porting the game to OS 4.

Pros

- + Good graphics.
- + Addictive.
- + Expandable.
- + Interesting campaigns.

Cons

- A bit slow.
- Some scenarios crash.
- Difficult even on "easy".

Results

**Pretty
Good!**

Conclusion

If you are into strategy, Battle of Wesnoth is a very good game, especially considering that it is not a commercial development and can be downloaded for free! Development of the game continues so you can expect additional units, features and campaigns to appear over time. Even seasoned strategy gamers will find this title sets them a real challenge and once the built-in campaigns are completed you can download even more.

Rexx

Programmer's Reference

Robert Williams finds out how useful this new book on Rexx is to Amiga ARexx programmers.

ARexx has long been one of the Amiga's hidden talents because, as well as being a useful scripting language that is simple to learn, it can be used to harness the power of most significant Amiga applications and utilities. By learning ARexx an Amiga user can automate tasks in most programs as well as calling on command line programs and even remotely controlling Workbench. However to learn ARexx, as with any other programming language, you need some reference material and preferably a tutorial to get you started. While there are several good electronic guides to ARexx, there's nothing like a reference book that you can refer to while coding or even read when away from the computer if the mood takes you.

Now, it's hard to think of any Amiga related books that have been published in recent years let alone one on ARexx. So, when I saw this new book on Rexx I was interested to see how useful it would be to ARexx programmers. My aim in this review is to look at the book from

two points of view, firstly how useful this will be to an Amiga user who wants to learn ARexx, and secondly whether a seasoned ARexx programmer will get anything out of it.

The Rexx Programmer's Reference is a substantial paperback tome weighing in at nearly 700 pages, and is a little over A5 in size. The blurb on the back says the book aims to explain Rexx from the ground up for those new to the language but also offers experienced programmers the opportunity to expand their knowledge.

If the thickness of the book wasn't enough of a clue, just looking at the contents pages will tell you that it is a pretty comprehensive reference. They start with two pages of "Contents

"the information could be useful if you need to persuade your work to use Rexx."

at a Glance" which is followed by no less than thirteen pages of detailed contents listings! To make things a bit easier to digest the book is split into three sections. These broadly cover learning the language, Rexx interpreters for various platforms and appendices listing the instructions and functions in basic Rexx and various third party add-on packages.

Learning Rexx

The first section starts with a chapter introducing scripting in general and the Rexx language. Reading this chapter you really get the feeling that the author is trying to "sell" Rexx to a possibly sceptical audience. He does this by highlighting its ease of use, maintenance and portability comparing these features with other languages including Perl,

Python and C. To balance this advocacy, there is a list of tasks where Rexx would not be a good choice. One of the classic disadvantages of an interpreted language like Rexx is their relatively poor performance, although the author points out that the performance is somewhat mitigated by faster modern hardware. This chapter feels a little strange in what is

essentially a reference book, but the information could be useful if you need to choose a language for a project or persuade your work to allow you to use Rexx.

Following the introduction, you embark on a Rexx tutorial which

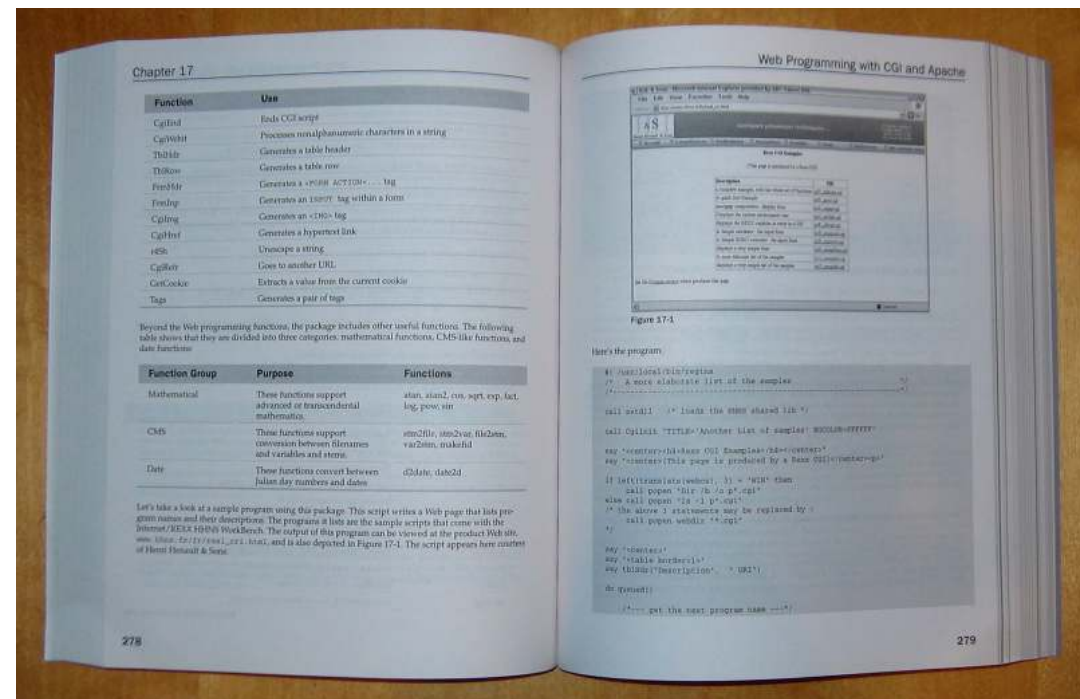
Rexx vs ARexx

ARexx differs from the standard Rexx implementation described in this book in a number of ways. Here are the more important ones I spotted, there may well be others:

ARexx uses the tilde (~) symbol to negate a logical expression (for example ~= means not equal to) where as the examples in the book use backslash (!) or not sign (!).

The chapter on File I/O describes using Linein()/Lineout() and Charin()/Charout() functions to read and write from files. These functions don't exist in ARexx and I/O must be performed using a more C-like model where a file is Open()ed and the lines or characters are read with the appropriate read function and written with a write function.

teaches you the basic parts of the language without using any add-on function libraries (which extend the functionality of Rexx). The tutorial starts from a very basic level, explaining fundamental programming terms such as variables and strings when they are first encountered. I would think that anyone with a rudimentary understanding of programming in any language could learn Rexx using this book. The tutorial is split into chapters, each handling a specific aspect of the language. The first chapter introduces the basics of a Rexx program and talks about operators and variables. Later chapters cover control structures (loops and decision making), input and output, string manipulation, sub-routines and debugging. Most tutorial chapters start with a short introduction and then proceed using example scripts to point out and explain parts of the language. If you don't want to



The book provides a good mixture of data tables, graphics and sample code along with the odd screen grab, there are very few prose-heavy chapters.

type in all the examples, they are available for download from the Wrox web site.

If you want to use this book to learn ARexx then things get a bit complicated. The Rexx standard was defined by the second edition of "The Rexx Language" by Michael Cowlinshaw published in 1990 and then formally as an ISO standard in 1996. Both of these occurred well after the feature set of Amiga ARexx was frozen. Also ARexx has a number of features which are specifically tailored to the Amiga. So while the examples given in the book are very close to being compatible with ARexx there are some differences. I've highlighted the differences I noticed in the "Rexx vs ARexx" box-out, but there may be other I missed.

Once you've mastered the basics, there are a couple of useful chapters on programming style and writing programs that will be portable between operating systems. Both topics that seasoned Amiga ARexx programmers will find useful if they are looking to reuse their skills on other platforms.

The tutorial section concludes with chapters on popular packages which can be used to extend Rexx. "Interfacing with Relational Databases" concentrates on using the Rexx/SQL package to interface relational database management

systems (such as MySQL, Oracle etc.) with Rexx. Many Amiga users who work in IT for a day job (and that includes this writer) will find it interesting that they could use Rexx for work projects that are database related. Another very handy chapter covers using Rexx as a web programming language with the popular Apache web server. Other chapters cover creating GUIs with Rexx and interfacing with XML data using RexxXML. As far as I am aware, none of these packages are available for ARexx (apart from possibly the ability to use ARexx with the Amiga port of Apache) although in many cases equivalents do exist. Therefore these chapters will not be directly relevant to the ARexx users. However if you know ARexx and would like to reuse your skills working with databases or web sites (for example) then they could prove to be very useful.

What Doesn't it Run on?

Section two of the Rexx Programmer's Reference covers the various Rexx interpreters available and gives you an idea of the plethora of systems on which they run. The most popular interpreters which run on mainstream platforms are treated to a complete chapter which summarises their advantages and special features. In some cases there are tutorials to help you use the unique features

offered by a particular interpreter. To give you an idea of the breadth of compatibility here are some of the interpreters:

Regina – A popular open source Rexx interpreter which is available on many platforms including Windows, Linux, Mac and the Amiga.

BRexx – A free interpreter which runs on many platforms (including the Amiga), but is particularly popular on hand-held Windows devices where an optimised version is available.

Reginald – A version of Regina with enhanced Windows support including the ability to create user interfaces and even access the dreaded registry!

Rexx for PalmOS – As you can probably guess, this enables you to use Rexx on a PalmOS hand-held device (note that Symbian based portable devices don't miss out as there is a Regina port for that platform).

Open Object Rexx – A version of Rexx recently open sourced by IBM that has object oriented extensions.

Pros

- + Comprehensive.
- + Covers Rexx on many platforms.
- + Useful tutorials.

Cons

- Little ARexx coverage.
- Confusing for beginner ARexx programmers.

Results

IBM Mainframe Rexx – Rexx was designed for use on these machines at the other end of the scale from hand-held devices!

Although ARexx gets a brief mention in the introductory chapter to this section, it doesn't receive a dedicated chapter explaining its differences and unique features. This is a pity as it would have made this book much more useful to readers looking to learn ARexx.

The third part of the book is a comprehensive set of appendices. These include lists of instructions and functions in both basic Rexx, those added by particular interpreters and add-on packages. There is also a guide to finding additional Rexx resources both on the web and at user groups, and the answers to the "test your understanding" questions which appear at the end of most chapters. You'll be pleased to hear that there is also a comprehensive 30 page index so this can be used as a reference book.

Conclusion

This book is a good way of learning Rexx, however if you specifically want to learn ARexx then you may find the differences (although there are only a few) off-putting. If you're a reasonably confident ARexx programmer I don't think you'll have any problem and will really get a lot out of this book. Finding out that Rexx can be used in such a wide variety of situations and on so many platforms will make your Amiga-learned skills much more useful. And the book goes further than just explaining the options available, in most cases there are examples and tutorials to help you learn the new features quickly. For the amount of information included, and especially if you can get it at the Amazon price, then I think this represents good value for money too.

Pretty Good!

.info

Author

Howard Fosdick

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<http://www.wrox.com>

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Amazon£18.89
(price checked 16/10/2005)

Support

Optimising Graphics Memory Usage in OS 4

Is your OS 4 Workbench suffering from choppy window movement? Do some programs just not run or complain about lack of graphics memory? Tony "ToAks" Aksnes comes to the rescue with tips to free up graphics memory.

One of the most common mistakes an Amiga user can make is to overload their Workbench with skins, patterns, themes and so on which will lead to excessive use of video memory. In some cases this can lead to a slow Workbench environment or even crashes. Another symptom of lack of free video memory is that programs that need it such as games, demos and even the 3D matrix screensaver will just refuse to run or display an error message.

A quick test of all themes at OS4depot.net and Intuitionbase.com showed that many require large amounts of video memory and that is why this article was born.

Raise Awareness - Display Your Video Memory Usage

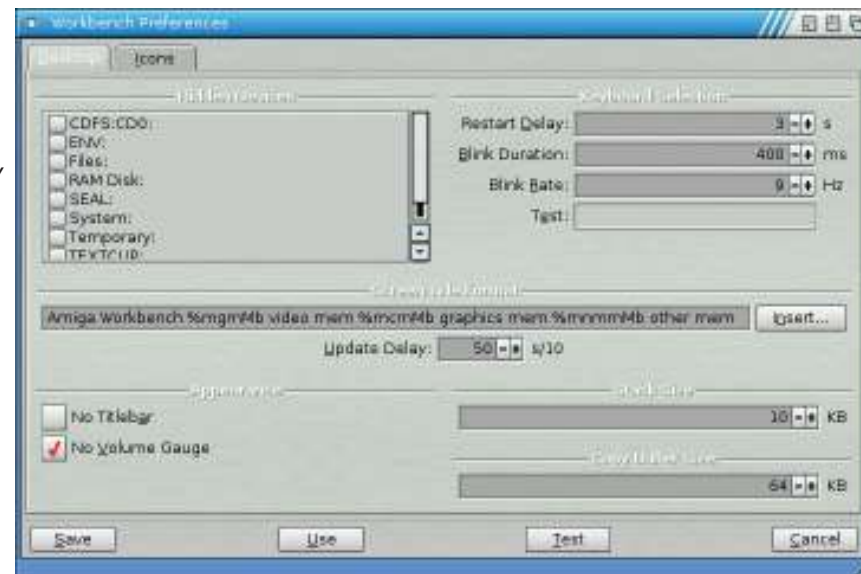
The best way for both people who design themes and of course for the regular users to keep an eye on their video memory usage is to display it in the Workbench title bar. OS 4 allows the user to customise their title bar, to do so follow these instructions:

Open the Prefs drawer in your Workbench partition and open the "Workbench" preferences program.

Click inside the "Screen Title Format" box and move the cursor all the way to the left and then click the "Insert" button. The window "Select a title format item" will appear, here select "Memory" in the list on the far left of the window. Select "Video" in the

Use Workbench preferences to add the free memory on your graphics card to the title bar.

Lots of useful information can be selected in this window for title bar display.



"Type" column followed by "Free" in the "Show" column and in the "Unit" column select "MBytes". Click the "Insert" button and the "Select a title format item" window will close.

If you check the "Screen title format" gadget now you will see that "%mgm" has been added at the start. If you press the Test button it will just display a number on your Workbench titlebar which is the amount of free memory on your graphics card in megabytes.

To make this a bit clearer, edit the "Screen title format" line by clicking on the line, move all the way to the left and type "Free video memory:" in front of the already present %mgm. Press enter on your keyboard and click the Test button and you will see your changes. If you wish you can continue to edit the line to place the video memory information in the position you want on the title bar.

It's well worth experimenting with the other options in the "Screen title format" window as many other useful pieces of information can be added to the Workbench title bar for easy reference.

Common Mistakes Leading to Excessive Video Memory Usage

Understanding Video Memory

First of all, the graphics card memory (video memory) is not the same as chip memory reported by default in the OS 4 Workbench title bar. One of the most common things I see around at forums and so on is people complaining about program "x" not working and when I ask "how much free video memory do you have?" and

Note

These tips apply mainly to Amiga OS 4. However on earlier versions of Amiga OS reducing your video memory (either chip RAM if you use chipset screens or graphics card) usage can still increase performance and reduce problems with video memory hungry programs such as games, graphics applications and demos.

they answer: 68MB even though they have an Micro AmigaOne which has only 32MB of video memory on board! In some cases users have had as little as 1MB free video memory with a near plain Workbench and a few screens opened.

The easiest way of telling if you are running out of video memory is when you get choppy or slow window movement and resize.

Window Refresh

The "Window refresh type" option in the GUI preferences program has a significant effect on video memory usage, here is how to set it correctly:

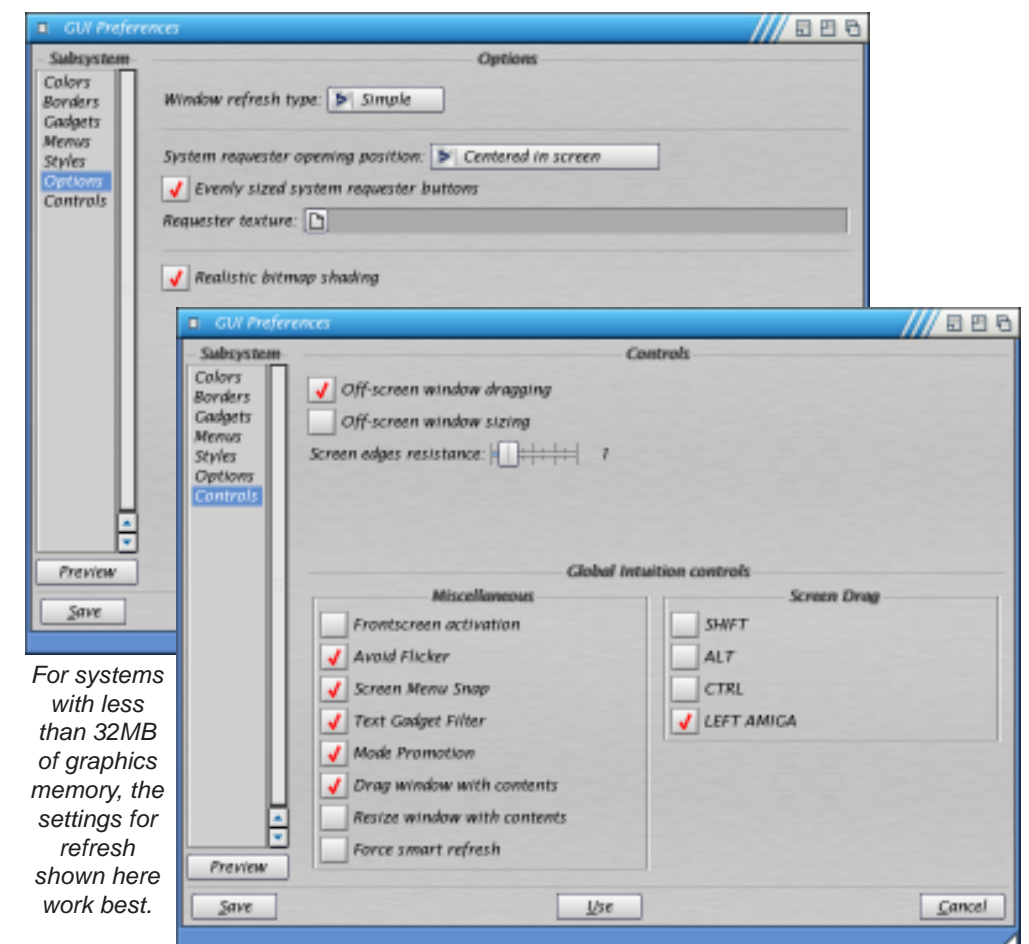
Open the GUI preferences program and select "Options" in the "Subsystem" list at the far left of the window. In the "Options" area to the right you will see "Window refresh type" at the top. This cycle gadget has two options, "Simple" or "Smart".

Should you use "Simple" refresh or "Smart" refresh? Well, here is the quick answer, if you have 32MB of video memory or less in your Amiga then you should use simple refresh as smart refresh will use a lot more video memory (sometimes as much as 3 times more).

TIP Please be aware of the option in the "Controls" subsystem of GUI preferences called "Force smart refresh". This should not be selected unless you know what you're doing as it can lead to crashes with programs like AWeb II. If you select the "Simple" window refresh in "Options" then you should also have "Force smart refresh" disabled.

WBPattern Layout

You might expect that a large Workbench backdrop picture would use lots of video memory but the



For systems with less than 32MB of graphics memory, the settings for refresh shown here work best.

options you choose in the WBPattern preferences program can also make a difference. Here are some tips for a good looking but frugal backdrop.

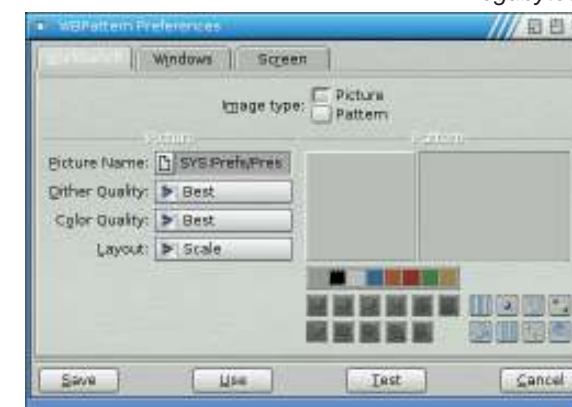
Open the "WBPattern" prefs program, this is one of the components that has not changed much from Workbench 3.x to 4.0 and therefore I'm sure that you're familiar with its basic operation. Of the various options available for the picture you select, here are their effects on video memory usage:

Dither quality – Eats only a little video memory.

Color quality – Eats only a little video memory.

Layout – If this is used incorrectly then you can run out of video memory very quickly!

Avoiding the temptation to select "Scale well" in WBPattern prefs can save megabytes.



The problem I am about to present is taken from a theme on Intuitionbase.com:

A – The Workbench picture selected in the theme was a 640x480 sized picture.

B – The resolution in the theme was set to 1024x768.

B – The "Layout" option "Scale well" was set to make the picture fit the Workbench (this function stretches the picture to fit).

The problem with this is that it used over 12MB of video memory just for the background alone!

The correct way of doing things is one of the following options:

A – Use another size of the picture if you have that (i.e. same resolution as the theme screenmode is set to).

B – Rescale the picture with an image processing program such as ImageFX or Photogenics to the size you want.

C – Select "Layout": "Centre" or "Tile" or even "Scale" but never use "Scale well" in a theme by default.

I hope this article helps you keep an attractive Workbench while freeing enough video memory for Workbench and other programs to run smoothly.

Support *Nigel Derbyshire's Wonderful* World of Wi-Fi

We enjoyed the WiFi article that Nigel wrote for issue 21 so much that we asked him to expand on it for this issue... after several stiff drinks and a couple of beatings with IEEE standards documents, he agreed!

Like all good sequels, this will be a letdown to some. To others, and I hope it's the majority, it will provide more of an insight into the world of Wi-Fi. There is going to be a lot of techie stuff covered in here, so I suggest that you start by getting yourself comfortable, in whatever position you choose (I'm open minded), get a nice cup of tea, or whiskey (I'm open minded!), and join me.

I'm going to start by repeating myself, which is quite an achievement this early on in an article. I'm just going to give a super-quick recap of what Wi-Fi actually is; it shouldn't hurt that much, but if it does then glance back at my article in issue 21, page 26.

Wi-Fi is the term used to describe all of the technologies, protocols and devices, that allow networked devices to connect to each other, or to a common network, without the need for cables or any of the "traditional" networking stuff that you have probably seen, wirelessly. This has obvious advantages, especially if you are using a portable device; Internet access while in the garden, or on the toilet!

To do the Wi-Fi networking trick you need two things. A wireless access point or wireless router and a device with a wireless network card. However, like all good technologies, it can either be blissfully simple, and on the

face of it Wi-Fi networks can be, or it can be devilishly complicated, which Wi-Fi networks also are! Yeah, I know I've probably lost you already, but hang on in there.

Cue the Starwars Scroller...

In the beginning, there was the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, and that was too much of a mouthful, so they became the IEEE (Eye-triple-E), and they were... Sorry, thought I really was doing a sequel then!

Wi-Fi is sometimes called IEEE 802.11b, or 802.11b, or maybe 11b. What does it all mean? Well, the IEEE 802 family of standards is maintained by the IEEE 802 LAN/MAN Standards Committee (LMSC). It contains a host of differing, but related standards, including the Ethernet family and Wireless LAN. Working groups focus on each of them. See the "IEEE Networking Standards" boxout for a list, if you can stomach it!

It really starts to get interesting when we focus in a little, on the 802.11 standard (Wireless LAN). The key here is the suffix letter. It all started with 802.11b in 1999, which is a little confusing, since you would have thought that it would have started with 802.11a, but that actually came later! Yes, I know, but these people need to earn a living somehow... Actually, that last paragraph was a complete lie – it actually all started with 802.11 (no suffix) in 1997, but that was about raw Infra-Red communications, so I'm taking an executive decision, and am going to ignore it!

Getting back to the 11b thing. There are two things that differentiate the various "versions" of the 802.11 set of standards; the frequency that they use, and the bandwidth (throughput) that they offer.

11b uses the unlicensed 2.4 gigahertz (GHz) band, which is split up into 14 overlapping staggered frequencies 5 MHz apart (I said that you should have been sitting down)! Just think of it like a load of radio stations, separate, but close together on the dial. Now don't turn a page, just take a break and make that cup of tea that you were supposed to make at the start!

Things get a little more interesting, or at least relevant to the real world, when you start to look at bandwidth usage. 11b has a theoretical maximum bandwidth of 11Mbit/s, that's more like 5.9Mbit/s when using TCP in real life due to the protocol overhead. However, the really clever bit is that it can scale the bandwidth down to 5.5, then 2, then 1 Mbit/s, which means that when the signal gets bad, you don't lose data just bandwidth – clever.

Shortly after 11b, came 802.11a, in 1999/2000 (although it was 2001 before anything could use it). It ran more than twice as fast as 11b at 24Mbit/s and looked like a winner. Except for one tiny flaw; it used a 5GHz band, and was totally incompatible with 11b. You could not have a Wi-Fi device that could access 11b and 11a networks. It didn't last that long!

802.11g brought relief, in 2003. It used the 2.4GHz band, so



Nigel Cafferkey's prism2.device enables Classic Amiga, OS 4 and MorphOS users to connect to wireless networks using inexpensive 802.11b PCI and PCMCIA cards like these. AmigaKit bundle the hardware and software in an easy-to-use package for Classic Amiga and OS 4 users.

was backwards compatible with 11b, and ran at 54Mbit/s. As a result, pretty much all new Wi-Fi devices are now 11g.

As I mentioned earlier, the main components that you need to setup a wireless network are a wireless network card and a wireless access point (WAP), which can actually be a wireless router. From my previous article, you may also recall that the key to it all is setting the SSID on the WAP, and telling the wireless network card what it is; allowing them to chat to each other. If you want to add other wireless network devices to it, then you just have to configure them to use the same SSID. OK, now while that is all entirely correct, it ain't the whole picture – you've probably guessed that anyway, because if it was then there would be no need for me to sweat blood over this article!

I'm sure you are all saying that the bit that is missing is security, and you'd be right. So I'm going to ignore you and start dribbling on about something different.

Ad-Hoc

The network described above is all well and good, if you happen to have a wireless router kicking around. If you don't, then it would look, on the face of it, that you are screwed. A typical scenario is you have two laptops (I was going to say two Amiga Ones, but that ain't typical!), both Wi-Fi enabled. You need to connect them up, so that you can transfer that "educational video" that you downloaded the other day, and you don't much fancy forking out for a wireless router just to do it. OK, good news – you are in luck!

Wireless network cards can operate in an "Infrastructure" mode, which is the one I described in the last article, and in "Ad-Hoc" mode. The Ad-Hoc mode is like peer-to-peer, that is, it is just a network between a few, usually two, devices. "Ad-Hoc" is what you need in this case. The key to making this work, is making sure that both Wi-Fi cards are using the same Channel. There are 13 channels (more or less in some countries) that Wi-Fi

cards can use, and you have to make sure that both cards are on the same channel. Just think back to those heady CB-Radio days, and you'll get the idea. The default (in England) is channel 11, but you can choose any one of the 13, even channel 13 if you fancy your luck! So, the A-B-C-Ds of this are as follows:

A – On one computer, go into the Wi-Fi-setup and choose to create an Ad-Hoc network.
B – Give it a name.
C – Choose a channel number.
D – On the other computer, browse for Wi-Fi networks, and join the Ad-Hoc one just created (you may have to manually select the name or channel number).

Note that if you're using a Mac, then they don't call it "Ad-Hoc", they call it (more accurately) a Computer-to-Computer network. The other thing that you need to worry about are the TCP/IP addresses. That is, you need to make sure that both machines have valid ones, in the same Subnet. For example if one computer has an IP address 192.168.0.1 then the other must be 192.168.0.n

Support

where n is a number between 2 and 255.

Security

Security. It's a big topic; it's shrouded in mystery; it's a black art. Bollocks! Remembering to lock your car and not give strangers your car keys isn't a black art – it's the same here, honest!

You need to decide who you want to have access to your shiny new Wi-Fi network; open or closed. You already have an open network (well done, that was easy, wasn't it?!). Creating a closed network requires a little more effort. I've used the expression "the key to it is" quite a lot in this article, well in this case it is literally that. The key word here is "key"! The basic principle is that you first choose the type of encryption that you want to use, more on that in a moment, then choose a key (which you can think of as a password). Any Wi-Fi device wanting to join your closed network needs to know what encryption method you are using and what the key is.

Encryption is made to be broken. Well, it isn't but there will always be clever people who will have a go, and they generally succeed. The first type of encryption that came to Wi-Fi networks in 1999 was called Wired Equivalent Privacy (WEP). Its notable feature is that it can have a 40-bit or 104-bit key. To put that into context, standard SSL (HTTPS) connections on the Internet use a 128-bit key. The other notable feature that it had was that it was **crap**. I haven't unfortunately, or fortunately!, got the space here to go into all the gooey details, but suffice to say that in 2005 the FBI demonstrated cracking WEP, with publicly available tools, in three minutes.

In 2003 the Wi-Fi Alliance came up with a solution, called Wi-Fi Protected Access (WPA). With a 128-bit key, and other security improvements, it's the one to have! Unfortunately, that doesn't apply to the Amiga community, since the drivers for the superb AmigaKit PCI

IEEE Networking Standards

The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers maintains a portfolio of networking standards in the 802.x family. Here's a list so you'll know what network nerds are talking about! Notice how the IEEE chickened out with they got to 13!

- 802.1 Higher layer LAN protocols
- 802.2 Logical link control
- 802.3 Ethernet
- 802.4 Token bus (disbanded)
- 802.5 Token Ring
- 802.6 Metropolitan Area Networks (disbanded)
- 802.7 Broadband LAN using Coaxial Cable (disbanded)
- 802.8 Fiber Optic TAG (disbanded)
- 802.9 Integrated Services LAN (disbanded)
- 802.10 Interoperable LAN Security (disbanded)
- 802.11 Wireless LAN
- 802.12 demand priority
- 802.13 (not used)
- 802.14 Cable modems (disbanded)
- 802.15 Wireless PAN
- 802.16 Broadband wireless access
- 802.17 Resilient packet ring
- 802.18 Radio Regulatory TAG
- 802.19 Coexistence TAG
- 802.20 Mobile Broadband Wireless Access
- 802.21 Media Independent Handoff
- 802.22 Wireless Regional Area Network


Wi-Fi card only support WEP. In fact, you will occasionally stumble across older Wi-Fi cards that only support WEP. Okay, stop shouting – I know it's not fair! All is not lost, since there is a second line of defence that you can deploy in your closed Wi-Fi network – MAC address filtering.

Media Access Control (MAC) addresses have nothing whatsoever to do with the Apple Macintosh, but are a unique identifier attached to most forms of networking equipment. The numbering scheme used allows for 281,474,976,710,656 unique addresses. Every single network device has a unique number, for example 00:11:24:A3:AE:C3. Using this, you can setup MAC Address Filtering on your wireless access point or router. This just consists of a list of MAC addresses that are allowed to connect to it. When a device tries to connect, the WAP gets the device's MAC address and checks it against its list. If the address is in the list, then the device is allowed to connect.

Take a deep breath, and a swig of tea (or whiskey) – you

AmigaKit.com Wireless PC Card Review Update

As an update to my previous article, the guys at AmigaKit have kindly sent me a software update for their AmigaOne Wi-Fi PCI card that I reviewed in the last Total Amiga (issue 21, page 27). I can report that they have addressed my concerns about the installation process, and there is now a nice shiny GUI installer. Also included is a GUI utility, based on the Amiga Installer, which enables you to reconfigure your network without reinstalling. I highly recommend it if you want to Wi-Fi enable your AmigaOne and they also do a pack with a PCMCIA card if you're looking to hook up your A600 or A1200 to a wireless network.



The new installer removes the need for you to manually alter your startup-sequence and work out command-line options when installing your AmigaKit.com wireless card.

deserve it, just for reading through this much jargon!

Now let's have some fun! One of the best things about Wi-Fi is not setting up your own network, it's accessing others... Walk into a shopping centre; stay at a hotel; visit a computer store; have a drink in a pub. Believe it or not, there is a strong chance that all of these places have Wireless networks in place. Better still, you can probably connect to them, to get access to the Internet.

Some networks are open, some are closed, but in both cases it does not mean that you are "allowed" to access either. Before I explain, I need to get another term off my chest – "hotspot". As you know, Wi-Fi networks have a limited range. If you happen to be within that range, then you are in a hotspot – simple. Open hotspots can be there for two reasons. On purpose – to provide open access free Internet or through ignorance – they don't know how to make it closed. You would be surprised how often it is the latter! You would think that it would follow, that closed networks are not for your eyes, but you would be

wrong. The Wi-Fi network in a computer shop might be closed because they don't want anyone to have access to it. The Wi-Fi network in a shopping centre is probably closed because they want you to pay to access to it. The latter is becoming the most popular (in terms of numbers, not in terms of "popularity" – if you know what I mean!) For example, BT has a massive Wi-Fi network, that is made up of lots of small Wi-Fi networks, called BT Openzone. They all work in a similar manner:

- 1, Find the hotspot.
- 2, Attempt to connect.
- 3, Launch a web browser. Key in your Voucher number (like for pay-as-you-go mobile phones), or a username and password.
- 4, Use it (sometimes you need to leave the web browser window open).

Depending on the network, you will either be charged by the minute, or for a fixed amount of time. It usually ain't that cheap, I mean BT charge 20p/min on their "casual" tariff, but it can be a lifesaver if you need to use it in an emergency.

Interestingly, I think we are starting to see a slight shift away from charging for Wi-Fi access, especially in the USA. From a business point of view, that would appear to sound really dumb, but maybe not. When you walk into a bookstore, the "business logic" behind it all was to make sure that you bought a book as quickly as possible, and left. The idea being, sell quickly so that you can get the next customer in quickly. Waterstones (a large UK book seller), went against the grain. They started putting nice comfy sofas and chairs in their stores and seemed to actually like people sitting on them, reading the books – not buying! Madness! However, it does work. People are more relaxed; end up buying what they actually want and come back more often... Perhaps free Wi-Fi access would have a similar effect. If you are in Starbucks surfing the web for hours, or chatting to someone on

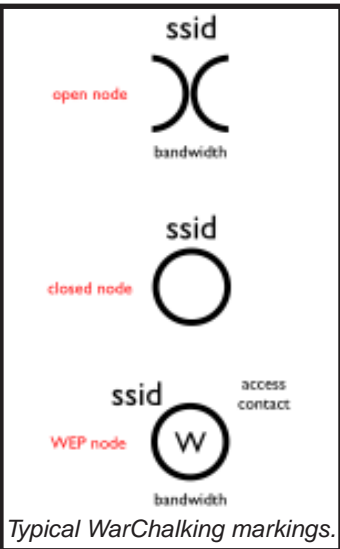
#AmigaWorld IRC, you're gonna drink more than one cup of espresso...

It's an Art... Honest

To wrap this article up, I want to talk about the "art" of finding hotspots. The official method is to find a hotspot directory on the Internet, punch in your location, and it will present you with a list of all of the Wi-Fi hotspots near your location, together with who runs them. That is way too boring for me... Let me introduce you to the ancient art of "WarChalking".

The term derives from the 1980s/90s activity, called WarDialing where you generated a load of phone numbers, then got your modem to dial them. Occasionally, you found another computer at the other end; a potential hacking target. WarChalking involves finding Wi-Fi networks and using a series of Symbols (see image below), that you literally Chalk onto the floor or building, that indicate what type of Wi-Fi network it is and what the SSID is. This activity was used in the early days of Wi-Fi by the hardcore geeks out there. Needless to say, it wasn't that popular with the authorities, who see it as a form of defacement and vandalism!

Nowadays, things are a little more "refined". Enter, stage left, WarWalking: Take a portable Wi-Fi device, like a PDA. Set it to continuously scan for SSIDs (hotspots) and beep when it finds one. When



ADSL wireless routers like this one give you all the network equipment you need in one reasonably priced box.

it beeps, make a note of where you are and what the hotspot is. Document all of the hotspots you have found. Cool, but it can look a little obvious. Let's refine it!

Add a GPS receiver to the PDA. Get it to log the GPS co-ordinates each time it finds a hotspot. Download the GPS and hotspot data to a computer and put them onto a map. Really cool, but still limited – it only works for as far as you can walk.

WarDriving – Swap the PDA for a laptop, running mapping software. Swap your feet for a car. Now just drive around all day long, collecting hotspots – groovy! As if that wasn't enough, there are reports of a new extreme version of this called, wait for it, WarStorming. Pioneered in Western Australia, this crowd have swapped the car for a plane! Respect...

The Future's Wireless

What's next? Well I don't think I can squeeze another article out of this topic(?) – but there are still a couple of things that I have chosen not to cover. I've not talked about the art of Hacking/Cracking Closed Wi-Fi networks; it's not really a "suitable" topic for such a quality magazine as this, and it's legality is still a little grey. A Google search will help if you are interested. Wi-Fi Injection also falls into this category (Google it if you want to know). As for the future of Wi-Fi, well it seems to be getting into all sorts of devices; Nikon sell a digital camera with Wi-Fi built in; I've heard that there are Wi-Fi enabled headphones too. With a new standard in the form of 802.11n which promises at least 100mbit/s maybe even 600mbit/s, I think Wi-Fi enabled technologies are here to stay.

I hope you've picked up a few nibbles of information from this article, but if there is anything that you don't understand, stuff that I've got plain wrong, or want me to expand on anything, then don't be afraid to E-Mail me (nigel@hyph-n.co.uk), with a subject line of "Wi-Fi Stuff" (so it doesn't get treated as Spam). I will do my best to ignore, I mean answer them!

Step by Step - Enabling WEP Security

Wi-Fi's WEP feature is by no means an ideal form of security, however it should stop a casual snooper from using your network connection. This is especially important as some computers and devices with Wi-Fi will almost automatically connect to open networks. So, a neighbour could be unwittingly using your network! Here are the steps to enable WEP on your network and on your Amigas using AmigaKit's new "Wireless-Settings" tool.

Tip:It's a good idea to get your access point and wireless card working without WEP encryption first, then you know any issues you have during configuration are due to WEP and not a general problem.

Enable WEP on Your WAP

Most wireless routers and access points (AP from now on) are configured via built-in web pages. The screenshots here are from a DLink DWL-900AP+ model. So, go to the IP address of your AP in a web browser and log in (check the documentation for the default IP address and password) then find the wireless security page.



First enable WEP, in my case this was by clicking the "enabled" radio button. The next step is to choose a level of encryption, in my case either 64bit (sometimes also called 40bit) or 128bit (104bit), I would choose the highest you can. The next option is the "Key Type" which lets you choose whether you want to enter your key (password) in ASCII (normal letters and numbers) or hexadecimal numbers, I would choose the former. Now enter the key you want to use, try to make this hard to guess, you can use upper and lower case letters and numbers. For 64bit encryption the key must be 5 characters long and for 128bit it must be 13 characters.

You will notice in the screenshot that there are boxes for additional keys, this is a feature of my access point enabling me to quickly switch between keys for added security, you don't need to fill them in. Now save your settings, the AP normally has to reboot for them to take effect.

Configure Your Amiga

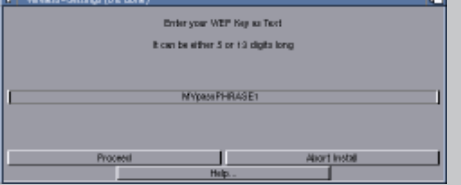
Load the Wireless-Settings utility which the installer places in your Prefs directory.

Note: If you have an older version of the wireless card software which did not come with an installer, contact AmigaKit for an updated version.

Proceed through the installer, on the "Specify your wireless network's name..." page make sure you enter the SSID configured in your AP.



The next page (shown above) asks you to select the type of WEP key, make sure you choose the same option as you set in the access point. Note that "Text" means the same as ASCII.



On this page, enter your WEP key exactly as you typed it into the access point. Be sure to get the case of the letters correct.

On the next page click "Proceed" to save the settings, and finally click "Proceed" again to complete the installation. You then need to reboot your Amiga for the updated settings to take effect. And that's all there is to it!

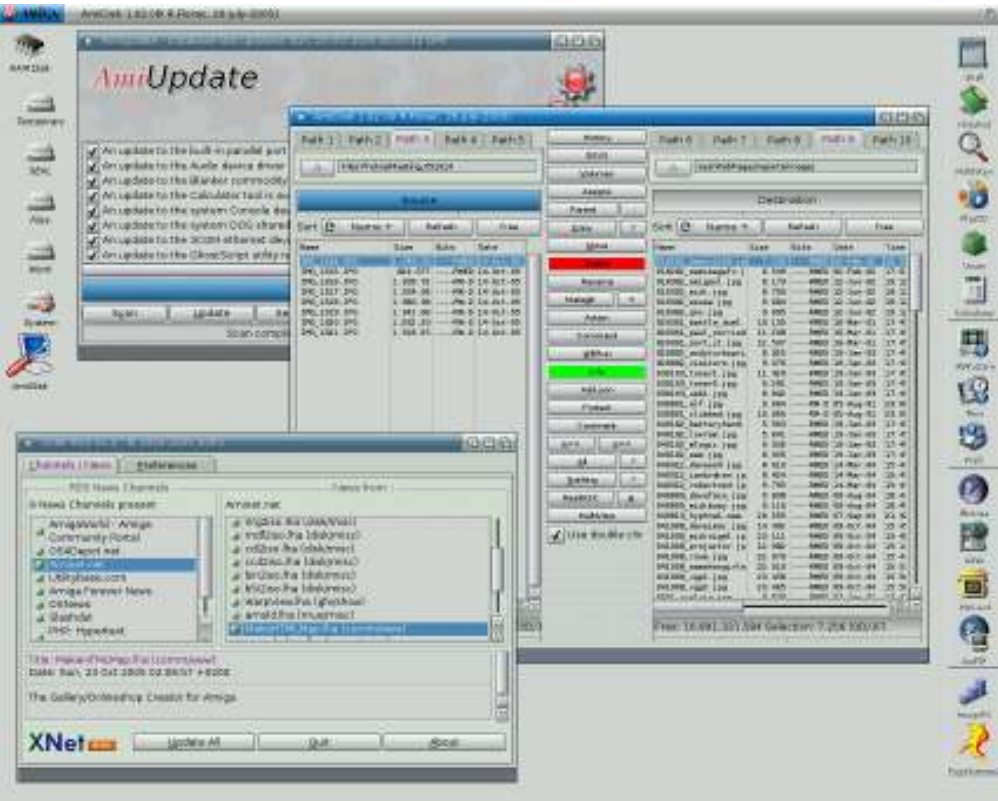
MAC Address Filtering

If you want to take security a bit further, you can allow only certain computers to connect. To do this first make sure your Amiga is connected to the wireless network; then go back into the web pages of your AP and find the section related to MAC Address filtering, blocking or control.



Choose the option to only allow certain MAC addresses to connect to your AP. Somewhere on the page there should be a list of computers connected to the access point; hopefully just the ones you know about! Select a computer from the list and add it to the allowed MAC addresses, repeat this for all the computers you want to connect. Once you apply this setting no other machines will be able to connect.

OS 4 Themes and Software



It's the all-in-one OS 4 screenshot showing one of the new Intuition themes (ZAmi) and AmiUpdate both mentioned in our OS 4 Update along with AmiDisk (OS 4 native file manager) and XNet-RSS (RSS news reader) both reviewed in this issue.

MorphOS Quake III



The MorphOS port of Quake III running on a Pegasos II with Radeon graphics card. This was made possible by the release of the Quake III source code and the MorphOS 3D APIs and drivers.

Battle for Wesnoth | New OS 4 Web Site



Screens from Battle for Wesnoth, a turn-based strategy game recently ported to OS 4, showing its graphics and effects.



Broken Sword



Revolution Software's classic point-and-click adventure with its beautiful hand-drawn graphics.